

THE STATE IN ANCIENT INDIA

*Study in the Structure and Practical Working of
Political Institutions in North India in Ancient Times*

*This is approved for the degree of Doctor of Science
(Economics) in the University of London*

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PREFACE

THE scope of this thesis is confined to the treatment of the structure and practical working of political institutions in Northern India in ancient times, *i.e.*, up to the Muslim conquest. The discussion of the *origines* of institutions is excluded from the work, except in so far as it is essential to an explanation of the structure of institutions in historical times. Social institutions in general, social or political theory, ordinary political history, and the institutions of the Deccan and the south of India are touched upon only as auxiliaries to the main theme. The work is based on a first-hand study of the original sources. In handling Vedic evidence, the Vedic Index of Professors Macdonell and Keith has been useful as suggesting references to original authorities. Dr. Richard Fick's *Social Organisation in North-Eastern India in Buddha's time* has likewise been extremely helpful for the Jātakas. A good many of the references in Chapter V (on Jātakas) are identical with those in Dr. Fick's excellent treatise but the sixth book of the Jātakas has also been utilised; some new facts are adduced throughout and fresh conclusions enunciated. In connection with Epic data some suggestions were derived from the well-known essay of Dr. Hopkins on the Social and Military Position of the Ruling Caste (*J. A. O. S.*, XIII, 1888). In Chapters X and XII and in a few paragraphs of other chapters, dealing with theoretical books, the material used is much the same as in my *Theory of Government in Ancient India (post-Vedic)* but the point of view is different and some of the passages utilised are also different.

The radical divergence of my hypotheses from the conclusions of my predecessors renders it all the more

obligatory on my part to express my gratitude to them. But for their invaluable pioneer work in the domain of ancient Indian politics, it would have been impossible to write a connected account of the development of Hindu administration or to offer fresh interpretations of its various aspects. My particular obligations are due to my tutor Prof. H. J. Laski and other teachers at the London School of Economics and Political Science who guided my studies in Sociology, Political Science and Public Administration. Prof. A. Berriedale Keith and Dr. L. D. Barnett kindly offered valuable suggestions on the dates of some Sanskrit texts. Prof. C. N. Nallamuthu Ammal, M.A., B.Sc. (London), of Lady Willingdon's College, Madras, brought some Tâmil data to my notice and assisted in their evaluation. Dr. Pran Nath, D.Sc. (London), during his tenure at the India Office Library, extended to me all facilities of research there and directed me to a number of little known texts which, otherwise, might have escaped my notice. The advice of my colleague Mr. Kṣetreśa Chandra Chaṭṭopâdhyâya, M.A., never grudged on the busiest of days, was always helpful in handling Vedic and classical Sanskrit texts. Another colleague, Mr. Bisheshar Prasad Srivastava, M.A., offered valuable criticism and saw part of the book through the press. Mr. Ram Shankar Prasad, M.A., read the proofs of the rest of the work and also compiled the Index.

The Royal Asiatic Society's scheme of transliteration has been adopted with slight modifications which will explain themselves. The accepted spelling of place-names has been employed but diacritical signs have often been put to facilitate correct pronunciation. The proper names of persons are accented exactly in the manner adopted by their bearers.

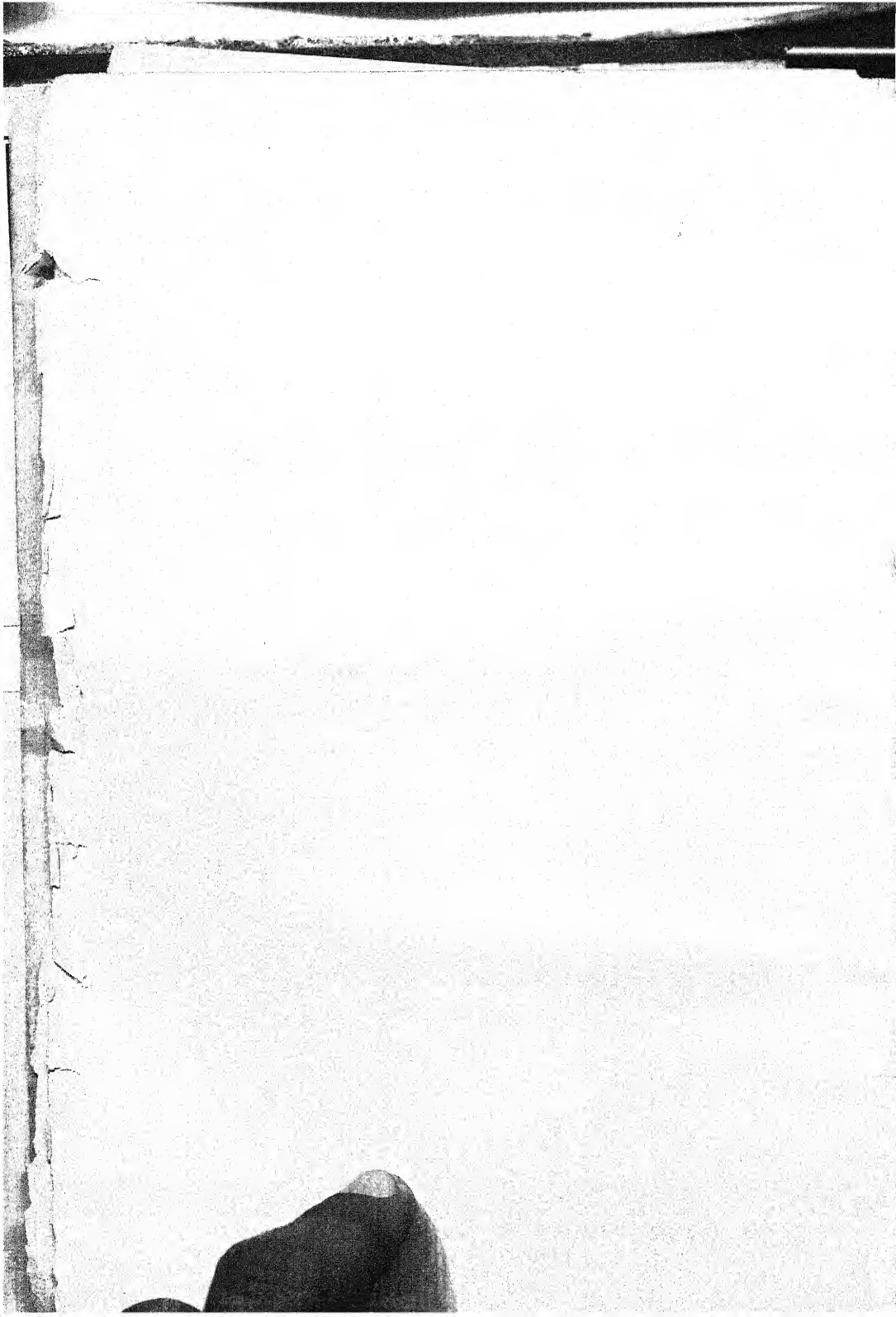
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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction	1
II. The Age of the R̥gveda (Books I—IX)	17
III. Gleanings from Later Vedic Literature	33
IV. Gleanings from the Śāstras	57
V. The Epics	76
VI. The Jātakas	114
VII. Pre-Mauryan Administrations	154
VIII. The Mauryan Administration	176
IX. After the Mauryan Empire	215
X. The Dharma Śāstras, the Arthaśāstras and other Literature	236
XI. The Gupta Empire and After	282
XII. The Later Dharma Śāstras, Purāṇas and other Literature	322
XIII. The Seventh Century A.D.	343
XIV. From the Eighth to the Tenth Century A.D.	385
XV. Kashmīr and Chambā	419
XVI. The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries A.D.	441
XVII. Conclusion	469
Bibliography	515
Index	530
Corrigenda	579

ABBREVIATIONS

- Ep. Ind. Epigraphia Indica.
Ind. Ant. Indian Antiquary.
J. A. S. B. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J. A. O. S. Journal of the American Oriental Society.
J. B. B. R. A. S. . . . Journal of the Bombay Branch of the
Royal Asiatic Society.
J. B. O. R. S. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research
Society.
J. R. A. S. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.



THE STATE IN ANCIENT INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

The political institutions of the Hindus¹ are, in their origin, as old as those of the Greeks but it is impossible

The Basis of the Study.

to trace their development or visualise their working with the same clarity and fulness. In spite of the rapid strides of Oriental research during the last hundred years, there is no political history of India, in the strict sense of the term, prior to the sixth century B.C., while the gaps in the subsequent annals are numerous and sometimes cover centuries. The dates of many kings are doubtful, while nothing can exceed the difficulty of fixing the chronological limits of most of the Hindu poets, philosophers, grammarians and legal and political writers. Nor is the raw material available for the study of political institutions so abundant in itself as the size of the country and the duration of its history would lead one to expect. Historical compositions are few. Works on law or polity are certainly numerous but, for the most part, they are theoretical and do not readily yield any information on the practical working of institutions. General literature, religious or secular, gives something only after the most searching examination. The foreign accounts of India by classical, Chinese and Arab writers

¹ Throughout this book the word Hindu is used in a comprehensive sense so as to include followers of the Brahmanic, Buddhist, Jaina and other indigenous Indian persuasions.

are more valuable but they are few and far between and some of them have not come down to us at first hand. The inscriptions and coins which have been discovered and deciphered by a host of scholars in ever-increasing numbers of late constitute the real basis of the study of the structure and working of Hindu political institutions but the interpretation of administrative and fiscal terms

therein bristles with difficulties. A discussion, based on scanty and dispersed materials, partly of undiscussed certain dates, is bound to be perfunctory at best. Besides, there is the risk of reading modern or preconceived notions into the terms and documents of ancient times of which the atmosphere is so difficult to re-capture. One may be tempted to dismiss the polity of ancient India as mere "Oriental Despotism" which requires no further analysis and evaluation. Or one may import into antiquity the spirit and ideals of modern times. Again, such is the nature of our documents that isolated statements readily adapt themselves to attractive hypotheses and generalisations. The warning uttered by Professor Keith in regard to the *Rigveda* applies to much else in the range of Hindu literature, epigraphy and numismatics. "It is easy," he writes, "to frame and support by plausible evidence various hypotheses, to which the only effective objection is that other hypotheses are equally legitimate and that the facts are too imperfect to allow of conclusions being drawn."¹ Caution, indeed, must be the governing principle of all endeavours to elucidate the political ideas and institutions of the ancient Hindus. For instance, it is desirable to work on the assumption of later dates of books for which higher chronological limits are possible but not at all certain. To antedate any phenomena would be to weaken the very foundations of what ever hypotheses one may build. Another caution, equally

¹ Cambridge History of India, vol. I, pp. 78-79.

essential, is to resist the ever-present temptation of "combining information." A picture, constructed from texts separated by hundreds or thousands of years, may be fascinating in its fulness but may not be true of any given epoch. Similarly, documents from regions far apart cannot be used for a single area. In the uncertainty of dates and the obscurity of the whole subject, every document should, as a general rule, be handled by itself and then joined to others only on the surest possible ground. The application of the most rigid critical standards alone can serve to illuminate the subject and, it may be, to add a new chapter to the science of Comparative Politics.

The nature and working of Hindu political institutions were largely affected by geography, racial characteristics,

The Influence
of Geography.

social organisation and economic conditions. Geographical factors have, more than anything else, determined the trend

of Indian political history. While the Himālayas have, for the most part, formed an impenetrable wall on the North, the openings on the North-west have let in successive hordes of immigrants and invaders who brought with them new types of civilisation, new ideas and institutions. Again, the north-western passes facilitated commercial and general intercourse between India and the Middle East. Recent excavations and discoveries, carried out chiefly by Sir Aurel Stein, have proved that the extensive desert which bars inter-communication at present was not so arid two thousand years ago, and that in Baluchistān and Seistān there existed flourishing sites of civilisation which were abandoned, with the gradual drying up of the land, only after the second century B. C. The chances for an exchange of cultural and political influences with Persia, might, *prima facie*, have had something to do with the development of Hindu practices. Within the frontiers of India there are hills and valleys in the North, North-west,

North-east, in Central India and on the western coast, which afforded shelter to hard-pressed tribes and clans and enabled them to preserve their peculiar institutions. In the North, the vast Indo-Gangetic plains, flat and monotonous, have largely determined the form of political organisation. Here the contrast with Greece is complete. In Greece, as Zimmern puts it, "each little plain, rigidly sealed within its mountain barriers, and with its population concentrated upon its small portion of good soil, seems formed to be a complete world of its own. Make your way up the pasture land, over the pass and down on to the fields and orchards on the other side, and you will find new traditions and customs, new laws and new gods, and most probably a new dialect. You will be in a new nation."¹ In North India, the absence of any hills, lakes or unfordable rivers militated against the permanence of political boundaries. *Prima facie*, every state would tend, as it were naturally, to encroach upon its neighbours. It was not long before public opinion and political philosophy held up to admiration the ideal of the "big kingdom," "the kingdom extending up to the sea," "the universal dominion." Constant efforts were made to realise the ideal in some practical form or other, in reality or in name. The result was almost incessant warfare or readiness for war which was bound to influence the structure and working of governmental institutions. It would promote the monarchy as against other forms of government. It might mean heavy military expenditure and correspondingly heavy taxation. Whenever an extensive dominion came into being, the difficulty of communications,—the standing difficulty of all pre-modern governments—might prove well-nigh insurmountable. The authority at the centre could not easily make itself felt at the circumference. Rigid centralisation would be impracticable. Regional autonomy would

¹ A. E. Zimmern, *Greek Commonwealth*, pp. 62-63.

tend to be the rule. Nor would an "empire" under such circumstances hold together long even nominally. The outlying regions would constantly be tempted to cut themselves adrift from the main body, to start on an absolutely independent career and, in their turn, to make a bid for supremacy. Once again, at the first signs of weakness or pressure at the new centre, the old process might re-start round another point. Indian political history would thus resolve itself into a ceaseless play of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in which the latter would, on the whole, prove stronger than the former.

India is split into two halves by the Vindhya and Satpuras. Nothing like the Himālayas, The Deccan. these chains of hills and mountains allow free intercourse between the North on the one hand and the Deccan, as the table-land is called, and the country south of the Kṛṣṇā on the other hand. But they have served to make the two regions different in race, language and partly in culture. Within the peninsula again, the Deccan plateau is in geographical configuration different from the extreme south and differs from it essentially in race, language and character. Politically, India is divided into three great entities, each with a system of its own. More energetic and persistent than the quest for the suzerainty of the whole country, has been the quest for supremacy over the North, over the Deccan and over the South as a whole. In particular, the region known as Tāmīlakam, extending from the south of Madras to Cape Comorin, has a strong individuality of its own. In spite of centuries of Āryan contact and influence, its civilisation has run an independent career. The admixture of Āryan blood is small; the languages contain few Sanskrit words; the political institutions show many important peculiarities. In the extreme south-west of India the Malābār, sheltered by the Western range and the sea from outside influences,

is still a museum of sociological curiosities. There is, however, no evidence to prove that its institutions represent a survival of those which once prevailed over the whole of the south or beyond. Further up, the sea and the Western Ghâts, running for hundreds of miles along the coast, enclose a narrow strip of land, called the Konkan,¹ which reared a hardy, sturdy race and enabled it to preserve and develop its peculiar institutions. Beyond the bounds of India proper lies the island of Simhala or Ceylon which, for centuries, shared in the history of Southern India and, to a far lesser extent, in that of India as a whole. Politically, however, it is an entity by itself. It is desirable that in any administrative survey the North, the Deccan, the South and Ceylon should be primarily treated by themselves. Since, however, they frequently influenced one another and since proximity and similarity of certain conditions made their institutions alike in some respects, the administrative history of any of the four areas can be enriched by comparison with that of the others and by illustration from them.

The most striking resemblance between the North of India and the rest of the country lies in the domain of economic life. Agriculture has been the predominant occupation of the whole country. The methods of agriculture have been practically the same everywhere and for the whole of recorded history. The conservatism which the pursuit of agriculture tends to produce has therefore been a common feature. Owing to the absence of any serious economic change, the framework of social and political life has not altered much. Besides giving the institutions a remarkable fixity, the dominance of agriculture has partly determined their form and character. The vast majority

¹ For a graphic description of the Ghâts, see Elphinstone, *History of India*, ed. Cowell, pp. 600-601.

of the population have lived in scattered villages. The proportion of the rural to the urban element was, in all probability, even higher in ancient India than at present. The population itself was much smaller and therefore even more

dispersed than at present. The Hâthi-gumphâ inscription of Khâravêla of Kalinga (C. 165 B.C.) puts the population of Kalinga, roughly modern Orissâ, at three millions and a half. A comparison of this figure with the figures available for the Kalinga army and the casualties in a former war and then a comparison with the numbers of the armies given for other regions, and, finally, a comparison with the present population of Orissâ, indicate, very roughly, a hundred millions as the population of the country. The mention of pastures and forests in Hindu literature and the general tenour of the foreign accounts also leave the impression that the country was not so thickly populated in ancient times as at present. No certainty is possible in a matter like this. But the rough indications are that in ancient times the population of India was about one-third of its present strength. It was thus even more diffused among villages than at present. Such a condition was not favourable to the development of that intensity of life which characterized parts of ancient Greece and which issued in democratic organisation. Not only

was this vital condition of democracy wanting, but the usual size of a state and the difficulty of communications put direct

Form of Government. or representative democracy as a form of central government out of the question. Besides, the essential moral basis of democracy was destroyed by the operation of caste which cut the population into at least four and generally many more racial, occupational or social groups, held in

Caste. varying degrees of esteem. Caste, however, also struck against aristocracy as a

form of government. It distributed the intellectual, martial and economic strength of the community among various sections and prevented that concentration of power in a single group which might enable it to dominate the rest. The elimination of democracy and aristocracy left the monarchy as the dominant type of government. Nothing else could meet the situation created by the conjuncture of geographical, economic and social factors. The monarchy alone could symbolise the union of any considerable area of territory.

On the other hand, the dominant sway of agriculture made the village the unit of society and, therefore, of

The village. political organisation. A village would, of course, share in the general culture of the

land. But in the ordinary routine of life, it would tend to be a world by itself. Everything would tend to intensify its group-consciousness. For fiscal and administrative purposes it would be the starting-point of all arrangements. Higher divisions of local government might be formed by grouping successively larger numbers of villages together.

While agriculture was the principal occupation, industry and commerce would be pursued by numbers of persons in

every locality. Industry has always shown a tendency to organise itself in guilds.

The guild, as a modern writer remarks, "is indeed a structure which, at one period or another, has existed over practically the whole of the civilised world. In mediæval Europe, industry was carried on under a system of enterprise at once public and private, associative and individual. The unit of production was the workshop of the individual master craftsman; but the craftsman held his position as a master only by virtue of full membership in his Craft-Guild. He was not free to adopt any methods of production, or any scale of production he might

Industry and Commerce.

choose; he was subjected to an elaborate regulation of both the quality and the quantity of his products, of the price he should charge to the consumer, and of his relations to his journeymen and his apprentices. He worked within a clearly defined code of rules which had the object at once of safeguarding the independence, equality, and prosperity of the craftsmen, of keeping broad the highway of promotion from apprentice to journeyman, and from journeyman to master; and also of prescribing the integrity and well-being of the craft by guarding the consumer against exploitation and shoddy goods."¹ Conditions in ancient India were, of course, different in many important respects from those in medieval Europe. But the basic principle is the same. Throughout the greater part of ancient Indian history, guilds in some form or other are met with and have an important bearing on the state.

The influence of race as a determinant of the course of social and political evolution cannot be traced so readily as that of geography or economic conditions. "National Character" has been the subject of some strange theories. As an English political writer puts it, national character is a wonder-worker at the beck and call of every embarrassed historian. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that a mass of men in a given region often differ in important psychological traits from another group. The ultimate origin of these differences may be traceable to geography,—to soil, climate and resulting habits of life and thought—but the presence of a set of deep-seated psychological traits constitutes a series of influences by itself in historical times. The "innate characteristics," as they may be called, have not been the same everywhere in India. For instance, the Tamil character which has so profoundly impressed the

¹ G. D. H. Cole, Introduction to Terry's Translation of Renard's Guilds in the Middle Ages, pp. xiii-xiv.

whole of South India is an entity by itself. The temperament of the Marâthâs who, of all Indian communities, come nearest to the Teutons in their intellectual and moral make-up, differs much from that of the people of Bengal or the Puñjâb. Yet behind all the diversities it is possible to discern some common characteristics, which, in their aggregate, sharply differentiate the people of India from those of any other country. The Indian temperament displays an emotional flow and vibration which, on the whole, militates against rigidity of discipline and organisation and bars uniformity in associated life. The religiosity of the Hindus is proverbial but there never arose any ecclesiastical organisation like the Roman Catholic Church or the Anglican Church. The Buddhist Saṃgha which represented the maximum of organisation in Hindu religious life, was pervaded by a spirit of intense localism. The Jaina orders were more loose, while the Brâhmanas seem to have been positively averse to ecclesiastical systematisation. Prayer and worship which have been congregational in Europe have, for the most part, been individual among Hindus. Here culture has been embodied in institutions to a far lesser extent than in the West. It is true that in certain matters, for instance, in ritual and caste, a degree of discipline was prescribed and an amount of organisation attempted, which is unknown in Western Europe. But even here endless multiplicity of forms and diversity of details are apparent. Again, a caste or a subcaste rarely had a definite machinery of government, legislative, executive or judicial. It left a great deal to the operation of custom and the informal working of group-opinion. This lack of organisation goes a long way to discount the Brahmanic claims to supremacy which fill Brahmanic literature. Whatever the theorists might say, the fact remained that the Brâhmanas had no organisation, no independent financial resources, no effective means of

resisting a king. Ultimately, they depended on the king, the landed magnates or the community at large for grants, fees, and presents. In economic life, too, the organisation was never so strict in ancient India as in Europe. The guilds, essentially local in character, were never well-knit together. In the political conditions which obtained in ancient India, this habit of loose organisation would tend to produce a sort of federalism or feudalism—feudalism which represents want of system rather than a system. This trait in the Hindu character was intensified by the imaginativeness which was another striking feature in the temperament of the ancient Hindus. To soar above the earth was often to lose touch with realities and to drift away from system. On the other hand, the Hindu mind was remarkable for its love of logic. It delighted in classification, division and endless sub-division. In practical life it sometimes pursued logic with extraordinary tenacity and tended to run an idea to its extreme consequences. Here is one of the causes of the growth of caste. Europe stopped at class; Hindu India rushed into caste.

Caste, which formed the basis of the social order, was, along with geography, race and economic postulates, a great factor in the political life of the Hindus. Apart from the fact that it ruled out democracy or aristocracy as a form of government for a state as a whole, it deeply influenced the nature, character and working of the monarchical state. Caste resolves function into a purpose, an ethical principle, a religious conception. In the exaltation of the group, it largely sacrifices the individual values. It strikes at the root of individuality and amounts almost to a denial of personality. It refuses to admit that every individual is, in his nature, universal and that he has the right to seek his own self-expression, to determine his own ambitions and pursue his own interests. The principle of caste is the negation

of the dignity of man as man. It rules out all idea of individual liberty or rights independently of those which arise from the necessity and desirability of performing prescribed social functions. Hence, there was no effort in the history of Hindu politics to define the spheres of individuality on the one hand, and the group or state on the other hand. "Laissez-faire" had no basis in ancient India. When it liked, society could direct everything pertaining to human life.

Caste would naturally influence the composition of the governing body. It would entrust government to the Kṣatriyas and, though the rule was sometimes violated, its prescription was generally effective. At the same time the Brāhmaṇas were, socially and religiously too important and, intellectually, too powerful, to be left out of political counsels. Brāhmaṇa priests or ministers were often by the side of the king. Legal difficulties were often submitted to Brāhmaṇa pariṣads or committees for solution. Attempts were made to enlist the moral support of the Brāhmaṇas for the government. Law, which is an expression of the social spirit, reflected caste at numerous points in ancient India.

Caste fosters group-psychology as opposed to an independent individual mentality or national consciousness. It helps the tendency towards functional organisation. Among the ancient Hindus, organisation, though loose in degree, tended to be both horizontal and vertical. There might arise multitudes of local and functional jurisdictions and intermediate associations standing in various, more or less ill-defined, relations with the state. Every group which has developed a consciousness, tends to be independent or quasi-independent in its own sphere. It rests with the state to co-ordinate the working of these groups, to keep each within its proper limits and, generally, to secure those conditions

under which they can flourish to the best advantage of the common good. The extent to which the state can fulfil this function of co-ordination and security is likely to depend on its intrinsic strength and animating spirit and the whole set of circumstances at a given moment. In this whole series of relationships, custom is likely to be the guiding principle, if written positive law is wanting. In such a case, sovereignty would cease to be monistic. In the rigid Austinian sense of the term, it would disappear altogether. It would be essentially pluralistic, diffused among myriads of groups, particulate jurisdictions and influences. Such was the situation which a conjuncture of basic circumstances brought about in ancient India.

Religion must be reckoned among the great factors in the history of the Hindus. Brahmanism sanctified caste and entrenched it firmly in the estimation of the people. It made law part of itself and thus tended to impart to it strength, conservatism and permanence. Religion sought to direct the life of the rulers as of the rest of the community. It inculcated charity, gentleness and promotion of popular happiness on the part of the king. It held a spiritual ideal before the state. It could serve as a moral check on the despotism. Occasionally, it might become the animating principle of the policy of the state. Under a king like Aśoka, the state might become actively missionary. Religious change was likely to tell on politics. The rise of Buddhism and Jainism shook the political position of Brāhmaṇas for a while. Incidentally, religion emphasised renunciation of the world and led many rulers to abdicate in favour of their sons or relations.

Such were the principal determining factors in the development and working of political institutions in ancient India. They were common to the North, the Deccan and

The starting
point of study.

the South and to all, except, perhaps, the most ancient, periods of the early history of India, though their actual force would necessarily vary from time to time and place to place. The history of India as a whole has generally been viewed from the North. But several years ago, a noted Southern scholar, the late Sundaram Pillai, laid down

The South?

that "the attempt to find the basic element of Hindu civilisation by a study of Sanskrit and the history of Sanskrit in Upper India is to begin the problem at its worst and most complicated point. India, south of the Vindhyas—the Peninsular India—still continues to be India proper. Here the bulk of the people continue distinctly to retain their pre-Âryan features, their pre-Âryan languages, their pre-Âryan social institutions. Even here, the process of Âryanisation has gone indeed too far to leave it easy to the historian to distinguish the native warp from the foreign woof. But, if there is anywhere any chance of such successful disentanglement, it is in the south; and the farther south we go, the larger does the chance grow.

"The scientific historian of India, then, ought to begin his study with the basin of the Kṛiṣṇâ, the Cauvery of the Vaigai, rather than with the Gangetic plain, as it has been now long, too long, the fashion."¹

But if one prepares to depart from the old fashion, one meets with an insurmountable obstacle at the very threshold. It is possible that the Tâmilis began their institutional career earlier than any people of the north but their early forms and working are lost to us. The oldest available southern records are considerably later in date than the earliest extant northern documents. A few Tâmil scholars have tried to prove that Tâmil literature embodies tradition as old as 12000 B. C. or even earlier. But their arguments have been contested by other Tâmil scholars. They proceed on the basis of the very tradition of which the

¹ Tamilian Antiquary, 1908, p. 4.

soundness has to be proved. If critical standards be rigidly applied, one can rarely go beyond the Christian era on the basis of Tâmil data. Social institutions and practices which leave their mark on customs and ceremonies may be traced to earlier beginnings, though, even here, the process is beset with difficulties at every step. But in relation to political institutions, the southern material does not carry us, in point of time, beyond the period which is fairly illuminated by northern evidence. If it did, it would be necessary to preface any political survey of the North with a chapter on the South. As it is, even the score of inscriptions discovered in the South a few months ago do not touch the other side of the Christian era. A discussion of Hindu political institutions must still start from the North.

The date, authenticity and value of each piece or class of evidence will be discussed as it is used in the following chapters. But a word may be said on the relative value of the data available.

The Raw Material.

The inscriptions must form *the* basis of any study of Hindu political institutions. Here some very remarkable personages proclaim their aspirations, motives, and achievements. Here the actions of numerous kings, officers, private individuals or groups are recorded by contemporaries, with reference to the social, economic and political circumstances of the times. The epigraphic records are supplemented by coins of which the legends, though brief, sometimes settle doubtful dates, introduce new names and titles and occasionally illuminate an obscure political situation. The few seals which have so far been discovered are equally useful. The remains of old buildings, towns, caves or tanks sometimes serve as valuable illustrations. Next in value stand the accounts of foreign observers, Greek, Chinese and Arab, which, in the case of the last two classes of writers, have been transmitted at first

hand. The Greek notices, preserved only in later extracts, cannot be accepted at their face value but they are, none the less, very useful. The next place must be assigned to the few Hindu chronicles or biographies, such as the Harṣacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the Rājatarāṅgiṇī of Kalhaṇa and the Vikramāṅkadevacarita of Bilhana, which throw a flood of light on the structure and working of political institutions. Finally, there is the vast range of Hindu literatures, Sanskrit, mixed Sanskrit, Pāli, Brahmanic, Buddhist and Jaina, religious, legal, political, secular; from which administrative gleanings have to be made. Owing to the uncertainties of the dates of Hindu literary productions which sometimes range over centuries and occasionally transcend a whole millenium, and from the theoretical character of a good many of them, the value of this kind of evidence is largely supplementary, comparative and illustrative. However, it does sometimes reflect the actual state of things or paint an ideal not far removed from reality. It is unfortunate that the epigraphic records and foreign accounts do not begin until the fourth century B.C. For the preceding centuries one has to rely entirely on literature.

CHAPTER II.

The Age of the Rigveda.

(Books I—IX.)

The Rigveda is the oldest document and the first of the four Vedas of the Hindus. It has well been said that it "is not a book, but a library and a literature."¹ The date and order of its ten Maṇḍalas or books and of the 1,028 hymns which they comprise, cannot be determined with any approach to certitude. Attempts have been made, notably by Arnold,² to fix their order of composition but the conclusions have been challenged by other scholars.³ The general consensus of opinion is represented by Keith when he remarks that the nucleus of the Rigveda is formed by Books II—VII, each of which is attributed to a different priestly family.⁴ To this were prefixed the groups of hymns by other families which constitute the second part (51—191) of Book I. Later, the first part (1—50) of Book I and Book VIII which is attributed to the family of Kaṇva were added. When Soma hymns were taken out and put together there came into being Book IX.⁵ The tenth Maṇḍala is considerably later. Its metre, language and ideas are conclusive on the point. It is

¹ Arnold, *Vedic Metre*, p. ix.

² *Vedic Metre*, p. 49, gives a scheme summarising the results arrived at.

³ See J.R.A.S., 1906, pp. 484—90, 716—22 ; *Ibid.*, 1912, pp. 726—29.

⁴ The families are those of Gṛtsamada, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Atri, Bharadvāja and Vasiṣṭha.

⁵ Keith, *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 77.

impossible to dogmatise on the chronological limits of the various sections. Max Müller placed the earlier and more primitive Vedic hymns between 1200 and 1000 B.C. and the later ones between 1000 and 800 B.C.¹ Attempts have been made to fix higher dates on the basis of astronomical calculations and other grounds.² The recent discovery of the Mitannian Inscriptions of about 1400 B.C. at Boghazkiöi was seized upon as solid evidence for assigning a higher antiquity to the *Ṛigveda*, but the discussion which followed left the problem practically where it stood.³ For the present 1200—1000 B.C. is the safest date for the first nine Maṇḍalas of the *Ṛigveda*.⁴ The scene of the hymns has been held to lie in the valley of the Indus and its tributaries. Some, indeed, might have been composed before the *Āryans* came to India from whatever their original home might have been. A few others, again, might have come into being after the *Āryans* had moved a little further east. But the vast majority of them undoubtedly belong to the Puṇjāb.⁵ The language of the hymns is a highly artificial one and, as many scholars think, could not have been the ordinary tongue of the mass of the people. It is probably the idiom, primarily, of the priests and, secondarily, of the rest of the upper class. The whole of Vedic literature, in fact, is primarily and essentially priestly literature. Its concepts and sentiments are to be judged as primarily those of priests and it has to be remembered that practices are reflected through a priestly medium.

¹ Max Müller, *Ṛigveda Saṁhitā*, Vol. IV, pp. vii et seq.

² For instance, Jacobi, *Ind. Ant.*, XXIII, pp. 154 et seq. See also Thibaut, *Ind. Ant.*, XXIV, p. 85, also p. 361.

³ J.R.A.S., 1909, Jacobi, pp. 721 et seq.; Oldenberg, pp. 1095 et seq.; Keith, pp. 1110 et seq.; *Ibid.*, 1910, Jacobi, pp. 456 et seq.; Keith, pp. 464 et seq.; Oldenberg, pp. 864 et seq.

⁴ Max Müller, *Prefaces to the Ṛigveda Saṁhitā*; Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 40—48.

⁵ On the Geography of the *Ṛigveda*, see Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 139—145.

A long course of development lies behind the social institutions reflected in the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*. On the

whole, Vedic society is patriarchal, but *Rigvedic* kinship, real or fancied, is no longer the *Organisation.* only bond which holds men together.

The nomadic stage is over and the bond of territory or neighbourhood is plainly in evidence. A third line of organisation is emerging into view. Scholars have long been divided in their opinion on the presence of caste in the first nine *Maṇḍalas* of the *Ṛigveda*,¹ but the weight of cumulative evidence lies on the side of those who hold that the institution is taking shape in the early hymns. In a hymn of the fourth *Maṇḍala*, the god Agni is referred to as possessing the *Kṣatriya* quality of strength.² A hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala* invokes the gods Mitra and Varuṇa as *Kṣatriyas*.³ Another hymn in the fourth *Maṇḍala*⁴ and another in the fifth⁵ refer to the *Kṣatriya* order. In the hymns which belong to the slightly later groups, the references are clearer. A hymn in the second-half of the first *Maṇḍala* has the following in the course of a glorification of the Dawn:—

“One to high sway, one to exalted glory, one to pursue his gain, and one his labour:

“All to regard their different avocations, all moving creatures hath the Dawn awakened.”⁶ In the first-half of the same *Maṇḍala* reference is made to Varuṇa's *Kṣatra* rule or dominion.⁷ In the eighth *Maṇḍala* divine blessings

¹ For instance, Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 185-203 (summarised in *Vedic Index*, II, pp. 248-49), holds that the Vedic Indians on the Indus were unbrahmanized. He connects “the change from the casteless system of the *Ṛigveda* to the elaborate system of the *Yajurveda* with the advance of the Vedic Indians to the east.”

² *Rigveda*, IV, 12, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, VII, 64, 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 42, 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 69, 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 113, 6; *Vedic Index*, II, 250.

⁷ *Rigveda*, I, 25, 10.

are invoked successively on the men of prayers, the warriors and the people.¹ In several hymns one detects priests receiving Dakṣiṇâ or priestly fee.² All through the R̥gveda the distinction between Âryans and non-Âryans, Dâsas or Dasyus, is clear and fundamental. Thus, even in Books I—VII, and yet more clearly in Books I—VIII as a whole, the elements of caste are present. Caste has not yet acquired the rigidity which characterised it in later times. In the ninth Maṇḍala, for instance, a R̥ṣi remarks that he is a composer of hymns, his father a physician, and his mother a grinder of corn; they are all engaged in different occupations.³ But whatever its laxity or fluidity, the institution of caste is there, probably in its initial stages.

It is not easy to account for the rise and growth of caste. Senart argued with great force that the Âryan practices of endogamy and exogamy were primarily responsible for the develop-
 Explanation of Caste.

ment.⁴ This, however, can be only part of the explanation. The term Varṇa or colour which denotes caste has rightly been held to supply a further clue. The history of the relations between the whites and the blacks in South Africa and the southern states of the American Union offers an illustration.
 Colour.

In ancient India the natural difference of complexion might not have been so great, colour-feeling might not have been so strong and the gulf between the fair and dark races might not have been so wide. But distinctions of colour, emphasised by divergences of civilisation and, for a while by a life-and-death struggle for the possession of land and cattle, would be enough to create an almost permanent line

¹ Ibid., VIII, 35, 16—18.

² Ibid., VI, 27, 8; I, 163, 7; VIII, 24, 29; VIII, 39, 5.

³ Ibid., IX, 112, 3. See also I, 113, 6.

⁴ Senart, *Les Castes dans l'Inde*.

of division. Ever and anon we meet with references to Kṛiṣṇatvac or black skin.¹ Elsewhere, Indra destroys the godless army of Kṛiṣṇa or black.² Expressions of contempt, hatred and hostility towards the Dasyus or aborigines and prayers for their destruction are interspersed throughout the R̥gveda. For instance, Indra is invoked to be cognisant of the hymns of R̥iṣis, to cast his weapon against the Dasyu and increase the vigour and fame of the Ārya.³ In the fourth Maṇḍala, the wily and impious Dasyu is to be destroyed and his wealth bestowed on Kutsa.⁴ Indra does destroy large numbers of them.⁵ Indra has made the Dasyus devoid of all virtues and an object of hatred to all men.⁶ "O Āśvins! destroy those who are yelling hideously like dogs and coming to destroy us! Slay those who wish to fight with us."⁷

These aborigines, however, do not seem to have been savages. Not to speak of their capacity to offer tough, stout resistance to the Āryan advance, there are references to their wealth,⁸ and their forts.⁹ When they had been subjugated and brought under Āryan sway, it was inevitable that, in spite of all the strength of colour-feeling, there should ensue some mixture of blood. The phenomenon would before long arouse anxious thoughts and an attempt would be made to stop the process. Stringent prohibitions against the intermarriage and interdining with the aborigines would be laid down. So the foundation of caste would be laid. Racial mixture, however, would be likely to go on in a legitimate or illegitimate manner and

¹ R̥gveda, I, 130, 8; IX, 41, 1.

² Ibid., VIII, 96, 13-15.

³ Ibid., I, 103, 3.

⁴ Ibid., IV, 16, 9-10.

⁵ Ibid., IV, 30, 15.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 28, 4. See also V, 70, 3; VI, 18, 3; V, 25, 2.

⁷ Ibid., I, 182, 4.

⁸ E.g., Ibid., IV, 16, 9-10; I, 176, 4; IV, 30, 13; VIII, 40, 6.

⁹ Ibid., III, 12, 6. "Indra and Agni have cast down the ninety forts which Dāsas held, together with one mighty deed."

mixed castes would be produced. Meanwhile, the natural process of social specialisation and division of labour would cut the Âryan body itself into sections. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the whole atmosphere of the Rîgveda is charged with militarism. The principal gods of the Rîgveda are great warriors. Indra, the greatest of gods, is the greatest of warriors, slaying and destroying hundreds at a blow. Even references to natural phenomena are clothed in militaristic phraseology. From beginning to end one meets with wars between Âryans and non-Âryans and among Âryans themselves. The

Social special-
isation.

Warfare.

Priestcraft.

dâsarâjya-yuddha, the battle of Sudâs against the ten kings, which fills so many hymns, is perhaps a fair illustration of the prevalent state of things. Society had to organise itself for war. We see the people as such engaged in warfare,¹ but as among the early Germans, there would grow up an order of warriors, a body of men who were constantly ready for the field and who would be the nucleus for the rest of the combatants. The hereditary tendency, so marked in all early society, would convert the order into a class. The Hindu tendency of running an idea to the extreme would convert the class into a caste. The requirements of religion would similarly lead to the development of a priestly caste. While all Âryans should pray and worship the gods, not many could make it the business of their life. Only a few could compose hymns of adoration and devotion and master the technique of sacrifices and ceremonies which were gaining in complexity with the lapse of time. A perusal of the Rîgveda leaves no doubt that the Âryans of that age had a keener zest of life than their descendants manifested ever afterwards.

¹ Ibid., I, 69, 3; IV, 24, 4; VI, 26, 1; VII, 79, 2; VIII, 96, 15; I, 126, 5; VI, 26, 1.

But they have already begun to get anxious about the Unknown Beyond and, on the whole, the religious vein among them is stronger than among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Their spiritual life lent itself readily to priestcraft which gave rise to a sacerdotal order. Once again, under the operation of the hereditary tendency and the logical tendency, the order would crystallise into a caste. The formation of the Brâhmaṇa and Kṣatriya castes --the priests and warriors.--would leave viś or people at large as one huge caste. With the Śādras representing a good deal of the aboriginal or mixed element already marked out, the fourfold division would be complete. It may be added that slavery was known to vedic society both in the period represented by Books II--VII and the slightly later one represented by Book VIII.¹ Beyond the pale of caste, there might still remain large aboriginal tribes or groups.

As society grew more complex and economic development led to further sub-division of labour, the four castes, particularly the last two, would split into numerous sub-castes.

The effect of permanent settlement in different regions which could not easily communicate with one another would be further to sub-divide castes on the basis of locality. But this process does not seem to have gone to any considerable length in the age of the R̥gveda. Nor is inter-marriage among the three higher castes barred or hedged round with such restrictions as appear in the Dharma Śāstras, not to speak of the Dharma Śāstras, of later ages.²

The political organisation reflected in Books II--VII is the same as in Books I, VIII and IX. All the nine Maṇḍalas can, therefore, be utilised

¹ Ibid., VII, 83, 7; VIII, 56, 3.

² On the whole subject of the development of caste, see Vedic Index, II, 247--71, and the authorities cited there.

together. The Āryans of the Rigveda are divided into a number of tribes. The 'Five Tribes,' frequently spoken of, seem to be the Purus, Turvaśas, Yadus, Anus, and Druhyus.¹ Besides them there are others such as the Bharatas, Gandhāris, Uśīnaras. Some scholars have worked out a gradation of Vedic society. The Grāma or village, perhaps originally the horde, consisted principally of the branches of a family living together. A number of Grāmas formed a viś or canton; lastly, a number of cantons made up a Jana or people. But as Keith has pointed out, these terms are used with distressing vagueness in the Rigveda, that, for instance, the Bharatas can be called at one time a Jana and at another time a Grāma, and that the evidence for the subordination of the Grāma to the Viś is totally wanting.² The term viś often means merely a settlement.³ In the plural it seems to denote subjects.⁴ Nowhere has Viśpati the technical sense of "lord of a canton," viś could not be a normal unit of government.⁵ So we are left with the Jana and Grāma as possible political organisations. Grāma means a collection, a horde, and it is possible that the term originally referred to the wandering tribe or clan. The derivative grāmaṇi, leader of a grāma, might at first have referred to the leader of the moving group. When the horde settled down, grāma would naturally mean the settled horde. It might be applied to a whole tribe. But in course of time the term seems to have been restricted to the smaller settlement, the unit of society, *viz.*, the village. This seems to be the most likely explanation of the ambiguity of the grāma. In any case, references to the grāma as a unit of habitation are numerous. For instance. in a hymn of the second section of the first Maṇḍala

¹ On their geographical distribution, Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 154–56.

² Keith, *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 91.

³ Rigveda, IV, 37, 1; V, 3, 5; VI, 48, 8; VII, 61, 3; VII, 70, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, 8, 4.

⁵ Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

Rudra is propitiated in order that all in the grâma may be well-nourished and exempt from disease.¹ In a hymn of the first section of the same Maṇḍala, Agni is invoked as the protector of the people of grâmas.² Even if the significance of grâma be doubtful in the Ṛigveda, it is more than probable that an agricultural people would be divided into villages.

The Jana once settled on a more or less definite piece of territory, probably including a number of villages, formed

a small kingdom. It was headed by a The Kingship. Râjan, a king or a chief, normally hereditary.³ It is just the arrangement which the prevalence of warfare and the totality of social circumstances would, *a priori*, lead one to expect. In a later work of Vedic literature, the Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, one of the true causes of the rise of the kingship seems to have been grasped. "The Devas and the Asuras were fighting.....The Asuras defeated the Devas.....The Devas said, 'It is on account of our having no chief (arâjatayâ) that the Asuras defeat us. Let us create a Râjan (râjânam karavâmahe).' All agreed."⁴ Similarly, the Taittiriya Brâhmaṇa records that "the Devas and Asuras joined in battle. Then Prajâpati concealed his eldest son Indra, lest he should be killed by the mighty Asuras. Prahlâda, the son of Kayadhu, likewise concealed his son Virocana, lest he should be killed by the Devas. The Devas went to Prajâpati and said, 'there can possibly be no battle for a state having no king.' Then they courted Indra to be their king with sacrifices."⁵ It is hardly necessary to remark that what the gods or demons are supposed to do is only a reflection of what men actually do or are believed to have done. It is possible that the Aitareya passage

¹ Ṛigveda, I, 114, 1.

² Ibid., I, 44, 10.

³ Keith, Cambridge History of India, I, p. 94.

⁴ Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, I, 14.

⁵ Taittiriya Brâhmaṇa, I, 5, 9.

or rather its original, whatever it might have been, enshrines a tradition that the Âryans had at first no regular military chiefs, that their enemies had such leaders, and that the example of the latter was followed by the former as a matter of expediency and necessity. Such a tradition might have been based partly on facts but there is no means of being perfectly sure of it.¹ All that can be reasonably inferred is that warfare which demands leadership and some concentration of authority, tended somehow to originate or strengthen the chiefship.

The Râjan is well-established in the Rîgveda and his character can be inferred from a number of hymns. He is the 'guardian of the people,' their 'ruler.'²

The Character
of the Kingship.

The gods Mitra and Varuṇa are invoked to keep the splendour of dominion, guarding the dominion that lasts for ever.³ Again, they are kings, guards of mighty, everlasting order.⁴ The authority of the king is binding. A hymn in the first Maṇḍala refers to Agni as claiming obedience like a king.⁵ "I am the royal ruler," says Varuṇa, "mine is empire, as mine who sway all life are all the immortals. Varuṇa's will the gods obey and follow. I am the king over folk of sphere sublimest."⁶ There, again, Trasadasyu, chief of the Purus, claims divinity for himself. ".....The Gods associate me with the acts of Varuṇa:.....I am the king Varuṇa; on me (the gods) bestow those principal energies (that are) destructive of the Asuras;.....I am Indra, I am Varuṇa, I am those two in greatness....."⁷ Obedience seems some-

¹ On the basis of a passage in the Rîgveda, Zimmer held that in some states there was no king in times of peace but his interpretation has been questioned (Vedic Index, II, p. 216).

² Rîgveda, III, 48.

³ Ibid., V, 69, 1.

⁴ Ibid., VII, 64, 2; VIII, 56, 1.

⁵ Ibid., I, 67, 1.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 42, 1.

⁷ Ibid., IV, 42.

times to be forced.¹ On the other hand, a hymn in the fourth Maṇḍala refers to a Râjan who dwells in peace and comfort in his own house, to whom holy food flows richly and to whom the people freely pay homage.² The rule of a king is expected to be beneficent to the people. A king is seen bestowing favours on those worthy of them.³ When the resplendent Agni is invoked as the protector of the people in grâmas, one detects an analogy with the function laid upon a king.⁴ Elsewhere, however, the king is spoken of as the master of the riches of his own subjects and of hostile people. The king was expected to lead in war. A hymn addressed to Soma Pavamâna refers to him as sitting like a king above the hosts.⁵ The king is sometimes described as purâṇa bhettâ, the sacker of forts or such earth-works as were thrown up at the time.⁶ The god Indra, doubtless after the earthly ideal, goes intrepidly from fight to fight, destroying castle after castle, with his strength.⁷ Agni is to win all the forts and treasures.⁸

Even in the earliest hymns of the Rîgveda, the king is surrounded by pomp and majesty. A hymn in the second Maṇḍala refers to Mitra and Varuṇa as kings and pictures them seated in their supremest home, the thousand-pillared, firmly based.⁹ Again, in the seventh Maṇḍala, "O Varuṇa, thou glorious lord, I entered thy lofty home, thine house with thousand portals."¹⁰ It appears that the king lived in a mansion as splendid as the arts of the times could rear. In the slightly later collections of hymns, Râjans are spoken

¹ Ibid., VII, 6, 5; IX, 7, 5.

² Ibid., IV, 50, 8.

³ Ibid., I, 67, 1.

⁴ Ibid., I, 44, 10.

⁵ Ibid., IX, 7, 4.

⁶ Vedic Index, II, p. 212.

⁷ Rîgveda, I, 53, 7. See also VII, 18.

⁸ Ibid., III, 15, 4. See also IV, 27, 1.

⁹ Ibid., II, 41, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., VII, 88, 5.

of as like gold to look upon.¹ They are too terrible to behold.² Presumably, they wore shining apparel.

The administration was expected to conform to law or custom. "Varuṇa true to holy law, sits down among his people; he, most wise, sits there to govern all."³ Elsewhere in the course of a hymn to Mitra and Varuṇa, the laws of kings are spoken of as standing firm.⁴ The idea of order as dwelling among men has emerged.⁵ "Strong is the thought of Rīta (law or truth), the behest of Rīta."⁶ In the task of administration, the king seems to have been assisted by a number of men. The gods Mitra and Varuṇa are spoken of as having set their warders "who visit every spot and watch unceasing." They keep guard over fields and plants; they find out those bent on evil.⁷ Spies are often mentioned in the hymns. They seem to have been more than detectives; they partook of the character of agents general. Varuṇa's spies are pictured as seated round about.⁸ Elsewhere they are "ever true and never bewildered."⁹ Sent on their errand, they "survey the two world-halves well-formed and fashioned. Wise are they, holy, skilled in sacrifices, the furtherers of the praise-songs of the prudent."¹⁰ Agni is implored to send forward his spies.¹¹ It is possible to distinguish only two officers specifically in the entourage of the king. The Senāni, 'leader of an army,' seems to have been a military commander appointed by the king.¹²

¹ Ibid., VIII, 6, 38.

² Ibid., I, 85, 8.

³ Ibid., I, 25, 10.

⁴ Ibid., VIII, 24, 8.

⁵ Ibid., IV, 40; V, 8.

⁶ Ibid., I, 68. Cf. I, 152, 1; V, 44, 2; VII, 60, 13.

⁷ Ibid., VII, 61, 8.

⁸ Ibid., I, 25, 8.

⁹ Ibid., VI, 67, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., VII, 67, 3.

¹¹ Ibid., IV, 4, 3.

¹² Ibid., VII, 20, 5; IX, 96, 1. Macdonell and Keith hold that the senāni "was appointed by the king, not by the people, to command in war when the king became too important to lead every little fray in person." Vedic Index, II, p. 472.

The grāmaṇi, leader of a grāma, seems to have been a village officer, presumably exercising both civil and military functions.¹ In the scheme of government,

The Purohita. the Purohita or the priest occupied a position second to none in weight and dignity.

"The Vedic Purohita," as Keith puts it, "was the forerunner of the Brāhmaṇa statesmen.....there is no reason to doubt that a Viśvāmitra or a Vasiṣṭha was a most important element of the government of the early Vedic realm."² In the first line of the first hymn of the R̥gveda, Agni appears as the high priest.³ In a later hymn he is the great priest in sacrifices, as he is "our help in battle-strife."⁴ Brahman-spati is also called great high priest.⁵ Priestly sacrifices are reckoned helpful to victory.⁶ Besides, throughout the R̥gveda the priests are the rain-makers and therefore command reverence and devotion. Brāhmaṇas as a class must be well-favoured. "The Gods uphold that king with their protection who helps the Brāhmaṇa when he seeks his protection."⁷ It was partly as an informal representative of this mighty order that the purohita took his place beside the king. It seems that a king had only one purohita at a time. Purohitas sometimes accompanied kings to battlefields and even took a share in the fighting.⁸ On the whole, a purohita may be regarded as an influential advisor who sometimes became the companion of the king.

¹ Vedic Index, I, p. 247. The Grāmaṇi seems to be identical with the Vrajapati mentioned elsewhere.

² Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 95.

³ R̥gveda, I, 1, 1.

⁴ Ibid., I, 44, 10. See also III, 2, 8.

⁵ Ibid., II, 24, 9.

⁶ Ibid., VII, 18, 13.

⁷ Ibid., IV, 50, 8-9.

⁸ Vedic Index, II, 5-8, 263. For Viśvāmitra, R̥gveda, III, 83, 58; for Vasiṣṭha, VII, 18, 83. For other references, V, II, 2; VI, 70, 4.

The expenses of the administration seem to have been met by some sort of contribution from the people, particularly the rich folk. In the second section

Revenue. of the first Maṇḍala, Agni is once referred to as eating the woods like a king eating the rich.¹ One finds no trace of revenue officers in the Ṛigveda, perhaps from the nature of the document. It is probable that the king held a considerable area of land as crown-land but nothing can be definitely proved.

The subject of justice is equally obscure. Nowhere does the king appear as definitely exercising civil or criminal jurisdiction. The expression Śata-

Justice. dāya² seems to mean one whose wergild was a hundred cows. It is probable that the system of wergild which is imbedded in the later Dharma Sūtras prevailed in Vedic society. For the rest justice might have been an affair of the family, the clan, and, lastly, the tribal assembly.

That there was an assembly, Sabhā or Samiti, is beyond doubt. But nothing can be gleaned about its composition. It might have been supposed to consist of all the free Āryas or of the higher classes alone. Nor

The Assembly. are its functions any clearer. The king certainly attended it. But Zimmer's view that he was elected by the assembly is untenable; at any rate, it finds no proof in the Ṛigveda. It is likely that, as Geldner argued, the king was merely accepted by the assembled tribesmen. For the rest, it is "reasonable to assume that the business of the assembly was general deliberation on policy of all kinds, legislation so far as the Vedic Indian cared to legislate and judicial work."³ Vidatha

¹ Ṛigveda, I, 65, 4.

² Ibid., II, 32, 4.

³ On the Sabhā and Samiti, Vedic Index, II, 426-27, 430-31. Ludwig holds that the Samiti included all the people, while the Sabhā was the special assembly of Maghavan and Brāhmaṇas. Zimmer

is another perplexing term which occurs several times in the *Ṛigveda*. It has been variously interpreted as an 'order,' a secular or religious assembly, a gathering for war, or even abstract ideas like knowledge, wisdom, priestly lore, sacrifice or spiritual authority. Bloomfield holds that it means primarily the 'house' and, secondarily, the sacrifice connected with the house. From the context in which the term occurs, it is not possible to glean anything about institutions.¹

Leaving the doubtful *Vidatha* out of account, the fact remains that there was a popular element in the polity of the *Ṛigveda*. There are, however, also some indications of a tendency which can only be called feudal. There are passages

A feudal
tendency.

in which the term *Rājan* which usually denotes a king is employed in the sense of a noble. Thus we read, "He amplifies his lordly might, with *Rājans* he slays, even mid alarms he dwells secure. In greater or less fight none checks him, none subdues,—the wielder of the thunderbolt"² In the *Ṛigveda* the term *Rājanya* denotes both the royal and noble families. It will appear that a king was often surrounded by a number of nobles perhaps drawn from the same class, perhaps only claiming a similar social status. At the same time there occurs the expression *Samrāj* several times in the *Ṛigveda*.³ It means great or supreme king and implies some difference from the ordinary

believes that the *Sabhā* was the village assembly. The authors of the *Vedic Index* agree with Hillebrandt in thinking that "*Samiti* and *Sabhā* are much the same, the one being the assembly, the other primarily the place of assembly." The *Atharvaveda*, VII, 12, 1, calls the *Sabhā* and *Samiti* "the two daughters of *Prajāpati*," and thus distinguishes between them. But apart from the fact that the passage is later than the bulk of the *Ṛigveda*, it carries us no further.

¹ *Vedic Index*, II, 296-97. See the authorities and references cited there.

² *Ṛigveda*, I, 40, 8. See also I, 108, 7.

³ For the references, *Vedic Index*, II, 433.

king. It may signify either an increase in power or a status of suzerainty. The latter hypothesis is not barred by the absence of large kingdoms. As the sequel will show, the Hindu political system permitted the establishment of the relationships of suzerainty and vassalage even within a comparatively small area. Beyond this it is impossible to go for the age of the R̥gveda. Sometimes the tribes contracted alliances among themselves. For instance, several of them fought against Sudās but such alliances were not federations.

CHAPTER III.

Gleanings from Later Vedic Literature.

The tenth and last Maṇḍala, distinctly later than the rest, of the Ṛigveda was composed probably after 1000 B.C.

After the Ṛigveda proper. About the same time three other Vedas took shape. The Sāmaveda is

only a collection of chants from the Ṛigveda for Sāman singers and is, therefore, valueless for historical purposes. The Yajurveda contains, besides a number of Ṛigvedic hymns, prose passages of its own. It is a collection of the formulæ and prayers of the Adhvaryu priests who actually performed the sacrifices. It has come down in two main recensions, the Kṛṣṇa or black and the Śukla or white. Of the former there are three complete texts—the Taittirīya, Kāthaka and Maitrāyaṇī Samhitās—and an incomplete text called the Kapiṣṭhala Samhitā. For the White Yajurveda there is the Vājasaneyi Samhitā.¹ About the same time arose

The Atharvaveda. the Atharvaveda which was, only long afterwards, recognised as a regular fourth Veda. Its spells and incantations, sometimes grotesque in character, were once held by modern scholars to be primarily non-Āryan in origin and the whole Veda was looked upon as an uncouth mixture of Āryan and "Dravidian" practices and superstitions. Recently, however, the opinion has been gaining ground that the Āryans had magic and witchcraft of their own and that the Atharvaveda is, like the other Vedas, Āryan in origin and spirit. Only it represents a phase of belief and practice different from what is mirrored elsewhere. About the time that

¹ On the composition of the three later Vedas, see in particular Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 171—92.

the last three Vedas were put into shape or only slightly later, Vedic ceremonial was elaborated and Vedic ideas explained or obscured in the earlier Brâhmanas. Of these the ^{The earlier Brâhmanas.} Pañcaviṃśa Brâhmaṇa, pertaining to the Sāmaveda, is the oldest. Next comes the Aitareya Brâhmaṇa of which the first five books are probably earlier than the rest. Then comes the Kauṣītaki or Śaṅkhâyana Brâhmaṇa. Both belong to the R̥gveda.¹ The ideas and institutions reflected in the tenth Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda, the three other Vedas and the earlier Brâhmanas belong to the same order and, with specification of their sources, can be reviewed in the same strain.

This extensive literature which falls roughly between 1000 B.C. and 700 B.C. belongs not merely to the valley of the Indus but also to that of the Ganges which the Âryans had penetrated in the meanwhile. The chief peoples of this period are the Kurus, ^{The peoples.} Pañcâlas, Śibis, Matsyas, Vaitaharyas, Kośâlas, Videhas, Kâśis, Kekâṭas, Vidarbhas and Aṅgas. The Śrīñjayas were closely related to the Kurus. Near the Uttara Kurus were the Uttara Madras.²

Caste has developed further and is now firmly established. It is now regarded as divine in origin and eternal in duration. In the well-known pantheistic Caste. Puruṣasūkta of the tenth Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda occurs the standard explanation of caste. At the commencement of creation appeared Puruṣa, endowed with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand legs. "Puruṣa is all this world, what has been and shall be." Three-fourths of him is the immortals in heaven and "one-

¹ Keith, Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, pp. 114—116, Bloomfield, Introduction to the Hymns of the Atharvaveda. Whitney, Introduction to the English translation of the Atharvaveda. Macdonell, op. cit., 202—17. Keith, Aitareya Âraṇyaka, pp. 172-73.

² Keith, Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, 118—121.

fourth of his is all creatures." From his mouth sprang the Brāhmaṇas, from his arms the Kṣatriyas, from his thighs the Vaiśyas and from his feet the Śūdras.¹ Hence, the primacy of the Brāhmaṇa, the strength of the Kṣatriya, the utility of the Vaiśya and the low position and dependence of the Śūdra. Henceforward the principle of caste meets us everywhere. It is true that change of caste is occasionally recognised as possible. Viśvāmitra, for instance, who appears as a priest in the Ṛgveda is called a king in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.² There, too, some kings are spoken of as performers of sattras.³ Cases of inter-marriage between different castes are met with.⁴ Once at least in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the position of the Brāhmaṇa is subordinated to that of the Kṣatriya.⁵ But the general trend of the later Vedic literature points to the consolidation of caste. The Brahmanic supremacy is to be buttressed in all sorts of ways. "Him who reviles a Brāhmaṇa, he (the king) shall fine with a hundred; him who strikes a Brāhmaṇa, he shall fine with a thousand; he who draws blood from him shall not behold the world of the Pitris."⁶ In litigation, the king is required to support Brāhmaṇas against non-Brāhmaṇas.⁷ In the Atharvaveda, as elsewhere, the Purohita is exalted. "The rain of Mitra-Varuṇa falls not on him who wrongs the priest. To him no command brings success; he wins no friend to do his will."⁸ On the other hand, the Vaiśya is

¹ Ṛgveda, X, 90, 12. Also Atharvaveda, I, 9, 3; X, 6, 31. Cf. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VI, 1, 1. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, I, 2, 6, 7, III, 2, 3, 9.

² Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XXI, 12, 2. On seers of royal origin, Vedic Index, II, 261.

³ Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XXV, 16, 3.

⁴ Ṛgveda, X, 109. Atharvaveda, V, 17. Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, IV, 24, 25. Vedic Index, II, 259-60.

⁵ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 20.

⁶ Taittirīya Saṃhitā, II, 6, 11.

⁷ Ibid., II, 5, 12.

⁸ Atharvaveda, V, 19, 15. On the priests see also Ṛgveda, X, 66, 13; 70, 7.

described as tributary to another, to be lived on by another, to be oppressed at will.¹ The followers of various crafts sink in estimation and form castes of their own. "The Śūdra is the servant of another, to be expelled at will, and to be slain at pleasure."² It is probable, however, that the fall in the status of the Vaiśyas brought them nearer the Śūdras and thus indirectly improved the position of the latter. In any case, however, caste barriers are now definitely set up and constitute a factor of first-rate importance in the political and economic life of the community.³

It is possible that the ordinary size of a state increased during this period beyond the point reached in the first nine books of the R̥gveda, but direct evidence on the subject is wanting. The new ideal which has definitely emerged is either that of the big kingdom or of suzerainty. In the Atharvaveda one of the most cherished ambitions of a king is to 'conquer' others. Victory in war is the burden of numerous hymns. For instance, a long prayer to Arbudi and Nyarbudi for assistance in battle breathes a jingoistic feeling of the utmost fervour.⁴ The question is whether victory in war ordinarily led to annexation or merely to some sort of vassalage. There are indications which point to the latter probability. The term Samrāj, superior king, occurs in the Vājasaneyi Samhitā.⁵ Adhirāja, which has a similar significance, is met with in the last Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda,⁶ the Atharvaveda,⁷ the Taittirīya Samhitā,⁸ the Maitrāyaṇi

¹ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 29, 3. Vedic Index, II, 255.

² Vedic Index, II, 255-56, summarising the passage in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 29, 4.

³ On the whole subject, Vedic Index, II, 247-71, and the authorities cited there.

⁴ Atharvaveda, IV, 22; VI, 38, 39, 97; VIII, 8.

⁵ Vājasaneyi Samhitā, V, 32; XIII, 35; XX, 5, etc.

⁶ R̥gveda, X, 123, 9.

⁷ Atharvaveda, VI, 98, 1; IX, 10, 24.

⁸ Taittirīya Samhitā, II, 4, 14, 2.

Samhitā,¹ the Kāthaka Samhitā,² and the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa.³ The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa speaks of the Ādhipatyā or supreme power.⁴ The White Yajurveda also contains prayers to various gods for supremacy to kings.⁵ The Kāthaka Samhitā and the Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā have the term svārājya which, though not indicative of supremacy, seems to emphasise the element of independence.⁶ The term Ekarāja, literally, 'sole ruler' which is used metaphorically in the R̥gveda⁷ seems to be used in a distinctly political sense in the Atharvaveda.⁸ There are only two possible explanations: either a big powerful ruler assumed a higher title or a king got some other rulers to acknowledge his suzerainty in some rough and ready manner and therefore arrogated the lofty designations. The latter supposition would imply a feudal tendency. It is supported by the references to fights for single villages, to prayers and oblations prescribed for one who desires possession of a village.⁹ If there were such small autonomous areas, they could hardly have stood by themselves and those who held possession of them are likely to have leaned on others for support. It may be added that during this period the terms Rājan or Rājya continued as usual to denote a king or a kingdom.¹⁰ It is probable that overlordship was still the exception but that it had emerged as a form of political relationship. It is not possible to carry the discussion further on the basis of the evidence available for this period

¹ Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā, IV, 12, 3.

² Kāthaka Samhitā, VIII, 17.

³ Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, III, 1, 2, 9.

⁴ Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XV, 3, 35.

⁵ Śukla Yajurveda, IX, 39.

⁶ Kāthaka Samhitā, XIV, 5. Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā, I, 11, 5.

⁷ R̥gveda, VIII, 17, 3.

⁸ Atharvaveda, III, 1, 4, 1.

⁹ Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, II, 3, 10; III, 4, 8.

¹⁰ Atharvaveda, III, 4, 2; IV, 8, 1; XI, 6, 15, etc. Taittiriya Samhitā, II, 1, 3, 4; VII, 5, 8, 3, etc. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 23, etc. A reference to the good government of a Kṣatriya occurs in the R̥gveda, X, 109, 3.

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⁴ Atharvaveda, IV, 22; VI, 88, 89, 97; VIII, 8.

⁵ Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, V, 32; XIII, 85; XX, 5, etc.

⁶ R̥gveda, X, 128, 9.

⁷ Atharvaveda, VI, 98, 1; IX, 10, 24.

⁸ Taittirīya Saṁhitā, II, 4, 14, 2.

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⁴ Pāṇcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XV, 3, 35.

⁵ Śukla Yajurveda, IX, 39.

⁶ Kāthaka Samhitā, XIV, 5. Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā, I, 11, 5.

⁷ R̥gveda, VIII, 17, 3.

⁸ Atharvaveda, III, 1, 4, 1.

⁹ Kṛiṣṇa Yajurveda, II, 3, 10; III, 4, 8.

¹⁰ Atharvaveda, III, 4, 2; IV, 8, 1; XI, 6, 15, etc. Taittiriya Samhitā, II, 1, 3, 4; VII, 5, 8, 3, etc. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 23, etc. A reference to the good government of a Kṣatriya occurs in the R̥gveda, X, 109, 3.

but as the sequel will show, the whole trend of later development harmonises only with the view here indicated.

The monarchy was the normal type of government. There are, indeed, a few passages which at first sight point to the existence of oligarchy. A hymn

The Nobility. in the tenth Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda remarks, "As the Rājans assemble together in the Samiti, the plants gather together in him who is called physician"¹ We read in the Atharvaveda, "They that ruled, a thousand, and were ten hundreds, those Vaitāhavyas, having devoured the cow of a Brāhmaṇa, perished."² The most probable explanation of these passages is that nobles are meant. In some other passages in the tenth Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda,³ the Atharvaveda⁴ the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā,⁵ and the Taittirīya Saṁhitā,⁶ the term Rājan seems to be used only in the sense of a noble. It shows that round the king there stood a nobility which claimed the same social status as the royal family.

The evidence at our disposal does not bear out the contention of some modern scholars that Popular acceptance of the king. the monarchy was elective. No actual instance of election is anywhere recorded. A passage in the Atharvaveda—"To the tenth (decade of life) abide here, formidable, well-willing . . ."⁷—has been interpreted by one scholar as referring to life-long election as opposed to election for one or more generations, but, read with the context, it is only a usual prayer for long life and prosperity. What seems actually to have happened was that the people formally accepted a new king. It is

¹ R̥gveda, X, 9, 16.

² Atharvaveda, V, 18, 10.

³ R̥gveda, X, 42, 10; X, 97, 6.

⁴ Atharvaveda, XIX, 62, 1; II, 6, 4.

⁵ Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, XVIII, 48; XXVI, 2.

⁶ Taittirīya Saṁhitā, V, 7, 6; I, 3, 6.

⁷ Atharvaveda, III, 4, 7.

possible that the people might refuse to accept a physical or moral wreck for their leader but there is nothing anywhere in the nature of qualifications for candidates for royalty or indications of habitual choice on the score of merit. When choice seems to be referred to in benedictions and prayers, it only signifies acceptance. A hymn in the Atharvaveda indicates that the people at large, including metal-workers, builders of chariots, etc., signified their acceptance of a new sovereign.¹ Another hymn records the blessings and benedictions showered on him on the occasion. "Unto thee hath come the kingdom ; with splendour rise forward ; as lord of the people, sole king, bear thou rule ; let all the directions call thee, O king ; become thou here one for waiting on, for homage.

"Thee let the people choose unto kingship, thee these five directions ; rest at the summit of royalty, at the pinnacle ; from thence, formidable, share out good things to us."²

Consecration.

The acceptance was symbolised by a formal consecration. In the Vājasaneyi Samhitā the king-designate before his accession steps upon a gold plate perforated with nine or a hundred holes, and the priest sprinkles the waters over his head, chanting the following sacred text :—

" With Soma's glory, I sprinkle thee ! with Agni's glow ! with Sūrya's splendour ! with Indra's energy ! be thou the sovereign protector of the ruling powers ! "

" Make him, O gods, to be unrivalled for great rulership, for great superiority, for rule of the people," etc.³

In the Atharvaveda the waters are supposed to be collected from many quarters. "The waters of heaven that revel with milk, in the atmosphere or also on the earth—with the splendours of all those waters do I sprinkle

¹ Atharvaveda, III, 5, 6, 7.

² Ibid., III, 4, 1-2.

³ Vājasaneyi Samhitā, IX, 40; XXV, 17, 18.

thee."¹ It appears that prior to the sprinkling, the king-designate, attired in bright clothing strode upon the tiger's skin unto the great quarters.² In several compositions of this period is mentioned the Râjasûya, a yet more complex ceremony for the inauguration of a king, which consisted of a series of sacrifices lasting for a year or so.³ In the Taittiriya Samhitâ⁴ during the Râjasûya rite of adoration the king is addressed as Mitra, Varuṇa, etc.⁵ The rite of consecration raised the king almost above humanity. It is, however, in the later Brâhmanas that varieties and details of the consecration ceremonial are fully developed.⁶

In spite of the consecration, however, a king sometimes came to grief. In the Taittiriya Samhitâ, the king emphatically claims the obedience of the people.⁷ But the same text elsewhere elaborates a sacrifice to avert the impending expulsion of a king.⁸ The Atharvaveda contains prayers for the restoration of an exiled king.⁹ Elsewhere the fervent desire is expressed that all rivals must be inferior to the king.¹⁰ All this points to some trouble which might be due to refractory nobles or other subjects or to tactless kings.

In such turbulence the Assembly appears to have been a factor to be reckoned with. In the course of a hymn in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Rîgveda which
The Assembly. may refer to the assembly in one's own state or in a conquered enemy's territory,

¹ Atharvaveda, IV, 8, 5-6.

² Ibid., IV, 8, 3-4.

³ Taittiriya Samhitâ, Atharvaveda, IV, 8, 1; XI, 7, 7. Aitareya Brâhmana, V, 1, 1, 12.

⁴ Taittiriya Samhitâ, I, 8, 16.

⁵ Taittiriya Brâhmana, II, 7, 15-17. Śatapatha Brâhmana, *infra*.

⁶ Taittiriya Samhitâ, II, 7, 18, 2.

⁷ Ibid., II, 3, 1.

⁸ Atharvaveda, III, 3-6, 4.

⁹ Ibid., I, 9.

a proud leader says, "Superior am I and have come here with a force capable of doing all things. I shall make myself master of your aims, your resolutions and your assembly."¹ "Of these that sit together," so runs a prayer in the Atharvaveda, "I take to myself the splendour, the discernment (vijñāna); of the whole gathering (saṁsad)

make me, O Indra, possessor of the fortune
(bhāgin)."² The concord of the monarchy
and the assembly was devoutly to be

wished and prayed for. We read in the course of a benediction in the Atharvaveda, "Fixed, unmoved do thou slaughter the foes, make them that play the foe fall below (thee); (be) all the quarters (dis) like-minded, concordant; let the gathering (samiti) here suit thee (who art) fixed."³ Again, "let both Sabhā and Samiti, the two daughters of Prajāpati, accordant, favour me."⁴ The Atharvaveda contains prayers for power of argumentation and eloquence in order to acquire influence over the assembly.⁵ Sometimes witchcraft was used to achieve the same end. "What (witchcraft) they have made for thee in the Sabhā—I take that back again."⁶ The assembly itself seems to have been sometimes unsteady in temper. There is a tell-tale passage in the Atharvaveda. "We know thy name, O Assembly; verily, sport (nariṣṭā) by name art thou."⁷ In the last hymn of the last

Concord in the
Assembly.

Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda, there is a fervent
exhortation for concord in the Assembly.

"Assemble, speak together; let your
minds be all of one accord.

¹ R̥gveda, X, 166, 4.

² Atharvaveda, VII, 12, 2-3.

³ Ibid., VI, 83.

⁴ Ibid., VII, 12, 1.

⁵ Ibid., II, 27; VI, 69.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 31.

⁷ Ibid., VII, 12, 2.

"As ancient gods unanimously sit down to their appointed share.

"The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thoughts united.

"A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your general oblation.

"One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord.

"United be the thoughts of all that may happily agree."¹

There is no means of gauging the actual power wielded by the Assembly. Nor is the scope of its activities at all clear. From a hymn in the last Maṇḍala

The work of
the Assembly. of the R̥gveda it appears that the assembly sometimes acted as a court of justice.²

Sabhâsad or Sabhâcara seems to mean a member of the Sabhâ, one of those who sat to decide causes.³ It is possible that the judicial work of the Sabhâ was entrusted to a small committee of its members. The matters of which the Sabhâ probably took cognisance as a court of justice, seem to have been disputes about land,⁴ cheating at play,⁵ recovery of debts,⁶ inheritance,⁷ theft, assault and murder.⁸ Besides justice, the most important function of the assembly seems to be that of general deliberation. It is impossible to dogmatise on the subject, but from certain references in the Atharvaveda it appears

¹ R̥gveda, X, 193, 2-4.

² R̥gveda, X, 71, 10. "All friends are joyful in the friend who cometh in triumph, having conquered in assembly."

³ Vedic Index, II, 427-28.

⁴ Kṛiṣṇa Yajurveda, II, 2, 1.

⁵ Atharvaveda, VI, 118-19.

⁶ Ibid., VI, 117.

⁷ Kṛiṣṇa Yajurveda, II, 6, 1.

⁸ Vâjasaneyi Samhitâ, XXX, 5.

that the Assembly discussed war,¹ peace,² finance³ and general well-being.⁴

Nevertheless the literature of this period leaves the impression that the centre of gravity had already shifted to the monarchy. It was

The King. the king who constituted the real government. In more than one hymn of the

Rigveda it is recognised that Rita—truth, right or law—is the base on which the earth rests.⁵ Beyond the Rita, another hymn in the same Maṇḍala of the Rigveda, which is reproduced in the Atharvaveda, inculcates firmness on the part of the king. "Here be you firm like the mountain and may you not come down. Be you firm here like Indra; remain you here and hold the realm."

"Firm is the heaven, firm is the earth, firm is the universe, firm are the mountains, let the king of the people be firm.

"Let the realm be held by you, be made firm by the Rājā Varuṇa, the God Brihaspati, Indra and also Agni."⁶

Round the king there seems to have been a circle of relations, friends, and chief officers, some of whom were called king-makers. "They that are kings,

The King's friends or officers. king-makers, that are charioteers and troop-leaders (headmen?) subjects to me

do thou, O Parṇa, make all people round about."⁷ The Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa mentions eight Viras or heroes, round the king, viz., his brother, son, Purohita, Mahiṣī, Śīta, Grāmaṇī, Kṣatra and Saṃgrahītri.⁸ The Taittirīya Saṃhitā and the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa give a fuller list of the Ratnins

¹ Atharvaveda, VI, 75, 103.

² Ibid., VII, 52.

³ Ibid., III, 29.

⁴ Ibid., VI, 107.

⁵ Rigveda, X, 85, 1; X, 190, 1.

⁶ Ibid., X, 173. Atharvaveda, VI, 87-88.

⁷ Atharvaveda, III, 5, 7.

⁸ Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XIX, 1, 4.

or jewels: Brâhmaṇa, Rājanya (noble), Mahiṣi (first wife of the king), vāvata (favourite wife of the king), Parivṛikti (discarded wife), the Senāni, commander of the army, the Sāta, charioteer, the Grāmaṇi, village headman, the Kṣatra, chamberlain, the Saṁgrahitṛi, treasurer, the Bhāgadugha, collector of taxes, and the Akṣāvāpa, superintendent of dicing or thrower of dice.¹ The Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā varies the order of enumeration and adds the Takṣa, carpenter, the Rathakāra, chariot-maker and Govikarta, slayer of cows or huntsman.² It is difficult to conjecture the exact status and functions of these notables but it may be surmised that after the age of the Ṛigveda there had ensued a good deal of administrative development, that there had come into being a number of household officers and administrative functionaries, that no clear distinction had been drawn between the two and that probably the same persons acted in a double capacity.

There seems to have been a large staff of spies. "From the sky," says the Atharvaveda, "his (Varuṇa's) spies go forth hither; thousand-eyed they look over the earth."³ From a curious allusion in the Ṛigveda, one is inclined to infer that spies detected or caught criminals. Afraid of spies, Yama rejects the love of his sister.⁴ It is interesting that the Taittirīya Saṁhitā mentions Dūtas as well as Prahitas.⁵ Many centuries later Sāyaṇācārya, the great Vedic commentator, explained that the Dūta was a regular representative of the king while Prahita was a mere spy.

¹ Taittirīya Saṁhitā, I, 8, 9, 1 et seq. Taittirīya Brâhmaṇa, I, 7, 8, 1.

² Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā, II, 6, 5; IV, 3, 8.

³ Atharvaveda, IV, 16, 4.

⁴ Ṛigveda, X, 10, 1-6.

⁵ Taittirīya Saṁhitā, IV, 7, 1.

The judicial administration still seems to be in a state of flux. Besides the Sabhâ or its committee which seems to have acted as a court of justice in some

Justice.

causes, the king probably performed some judicial functions. A hymn in the Atharvaveda refers to him as a stern corrector.¹ In the Kâthaka Samhitâ, a Râjanya is mentioned as an overseer (adhyakṣa) of the punishment of a Śâdra.² This may be a case of the delegation of judicial authority. To the expression Madhyamaśi, which occurs in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Rîgveda³ and reproduced in the Vâjasaneyi Samhitâ⁴ and the Atharvaveda,⁵ divergent meanings have been assigned. Probably it means an arbiter or mediator and thus points to the practice of arbitration during this period. On judicial punishments the evidence is very scanty. The Pañcaviṃśa Brâhmaṇa says that a Purohita might be punished with death for treachery to his master.⁶ It appears that treason was already regarded as one of the highest crimes and that it brought the severest punishment on the greatest in the land. A hymn in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Rîgveda shows that a gambler who lost heavily and got deep into debt found himself bereft of home and reduced to slavery.⁷ It is not impossible that heavy indebtedness led to slavery in ancient India as in ancient Greece and Rome. From the Taittirîya Samhitâ it is clear that various fines were inflicted for various offences.⁸

¹ Atharvaveda, IV, 8, 2.

² Kâthaka Samhitâ, XXVII, 4.

³ Rîgveda, X, 97, 12.

⁴ Vâjasaneyi Samhitâ, XII, 86.

⁵ Atharvaveda, IV, 9, 4.

⁶ Vedic Index, II, 84.

⁷ Rîgveda, X, 84.

⁸ Taittirîya Samhitâ, II, 6, 11.

The fiscal arrangements of this period are even more obscure than the judicial. In the tenth Maṇḍala of the R̥gveda, the king is called the sole taker of taxes from the people.¹ In the Atharvaveda he can eat the Viś, that is, levy heavy exactions on his subjects at will.² It appears from the Taittirīya Saṁhitā that there was no communal ownership of land, that fields were held by individuals or families and that possession was sometimes disputed.³ It seems that the land was the principal source of revenue and that regular officers had been appointed for the collection.

It is not possible to form any further idea of the activities of the state during this period. Roads are referred to* but there is no evidence to prove that they were constructed or maintained by the king. For the rest, the Vedic composers expected the king to secure plenty and prosperity and applauded those whom they believed to have fulfilled the ideal.

Some of the features of Hindu polity revealed in the second stage of Vedic compositions are observed in a more highly developed form in the last stage which is represented by the later books of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, the Śatapatha and some other Brāhmaṇas and the earlier Upaniṣads such as the Chāndogya and Bṛihadāraṇyaka. This class of compositions took shape, roughly speaking between 700 and 500 B.C. The other Upaniṣads, too, form part of Vedic literature, but they are so late in composition that they cannot be dealt with alongside the Brāhmaṇas.

¹ R̥gveda, X, 173, 6.

² Atharvaveda, IV, 22. For other references to Bali or tribute, see Vedic Index, II, 62.

³ For instance in the Atharvaveda, III, 4, 7.

⁴ Atharvaveda, XX, 127.

Caste is gaining in rigour and is dominating the whole of life. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa dedicates the representatives of the four castes to different deities at the Puruṣamedha sacrifice.¹ It prescribes different modes of address for the different castes,² and different sizes of funeral mounds for them.³ In the Soma sacrifice the Śūdra is certainly given a place,⁴ but elsewhere it declares that he is not at all fit to be addressed by a Dikṣita or consecrated person.⁵ Once, indeed, it seems to regard the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas as constituting the whole world and leaves Śādras altogether out of account.⁶ Here and there it is true one meets with exceptions. Janaka, for instance, is said to have become a Brāhmaṇa.⁷ In the Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Ajātaśatru is a teacher of the Brāhmaṇa Gārgya Bālāki.⁸ But the general trend of the period is towards the consolidation of caste.

In the general political conditions, too, a change seems to have taken place by this time. The ideal of the big kingdom is now more pronounced than ever and the average size of the state also seems to have increased. The eighth book of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa has a series of terms which denote variety or gradation of sovereignty—Rājya, Sāmrajya, Bhaujya, Svārājya, Vairājya Pāramasthya, Māhārājya, Ādhipatyā,

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, III, 1, 1, 10.

² Vedic Index, II, 253.

³ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIII, 8, 3, 11.

⁴ Ibid., V, 5, 4, 9.

⁵ Ibid., III, 1, 1, 10.

⁶ Ibid., II, 1, 4, 12; IV, 2, 2, 14.

⁷ Ibid., IX, 6, 2, 10. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII, 29) the progeny of Kṣatriya who eats in the company of men of other castes rises or falls accordingly.

⁸ Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, II, 1, 1. See also the Kauṣṭhiki Upaniṣad, IV, 1.

Svāvaśya.¹ Further, the title for the kings of the Southerners, the Satvatas, is Bhoja; that for the kings of the Westerners, the Nīcyas and Apācyas, is Svarāt; that for the kings of the Northerners, the Uttarakurus and the Uttaramadras, is Virāt; that for the kings of the people of the middle country, called Kuru Pañcālas and Uśīnaras, is simply Rājan. It is impossible to establish the exact significance of these terms, but when the title of Samrāt is applied to the kings of the Prācyas or Easterners, it seems like an inkling into the first beginnings of the Magadhan imperialism which was destined to affect the whole of India after the 5th century B. C.² Janaka, king of the Videhas, is also called Samrāt in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa³ and in the Bṛihad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad.⁴ Elsewhere the eighth book of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa declares that monarchy at its highest should have a dominion extending right up to the natural boundaries, up to the very ends, in fact, up to the sea.⁵ It mentions twelve such monarchs.⁶ Divested of its obvious exaggerations, the statement means that from time to time some kings had actually developed their power far beyond the average and almost brought a new type of state into existence. It could only be either an empire in the strict sense of the term or a suzerainty. The latter alternative finds support in the thirty-ninth chapter of the same Brāhmaṇa, where the Aindra Mahābhīṣeka is spoken of. That rite is said to have been performed by great rulers like Janamejaya, Sāryāta, Śatrūjit,

¹ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 3, 14; VIII, 12, 4, 5. The term Adhipatyā also occurs in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, V, 2, 6. K. P. Jayswal and R. C. Majumdar interpret Vairāja as absence of royalty, that is, republicanism. Macdonell and Keith take it to denote some form of royal authority (Vedic Index, II, 221). The context supports the latter interpretation.

² Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VIII, 14, 2, 3.

³ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XI, 3, 2, 1, 6; 2, 2, 3.

⁴ Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV, 1, 1; 3, 1.

⁵ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VIII, 4, 1.

⁶ Ibid., VIII, 14, 4; 19, 2.

Viśvakarman, Sudās and Marut, each of whom had succeeded in conquering the whole world. "A Kṣatriya who is consecrated with his Aindra Mahābhiṣeka, conquers all conquerors, knows all the worlds, becomes *superior to all kings*, gains renown and majesty, becomes self-created and self-ruled, after conquering 'empires,' countries ruled by the Bhojas,.....after death ascends heaven and overcomes death." Superiority to all kings supplies the clue. The "conquest of the world" did not mean the extinction of existing kings but merely the acknowledgment of suzerainty. The same conclusion emerges from certain

Royal sacrifices. passages in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.

It speaks of four royal sacrifices—the Rājastīya, Vājapeya, Aśvamedha and Aindra Mahābhiṣeka. The Aśvamedha was to be performed by kings who had been successful in Digvijaya or conquest of all quarters. A horse should be let loose with the words, "Go thou along the way of the Ādityas." Guarded by armed warriors, it should be allowed to roam about for a year, during which period oblations were to be offered by the sacrificer. When the horse returned unmolested at the end of the year, a grand assembly should be held of all the kings and chiefs of the country and, in their presence, the animal should be sacrificed.¹ Here, again, the presence of chiefs and kings at the assembly and sacrifice points to the relationship of suzerainty and vassalage. According to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, this rite had been performed by thirteen kings.² The bid for suzerainty might sometimes be rudely checked. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa speaks of the Satvatas who prepared a horse for the Aśvamedha but who were defeated by Bharata and lost the horse to him.³

¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, IX, 3, 4, 8.

² Ibid., XIII, 5, 4.

³ Ibid., XIII, 5, 4, 21.

Next to the *Aśvamedha* and the *Aindra Mahābhiṣeka* in dignity stood the *Vājapeya* and after it the *Rājasūya*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that the *Rājasūya* sacrifice is that of a *Rājan* and the *Vājapeya* that of a *Samrāt*, and emphasises that the latter is higher than the former.¹ Later, the same text mentions *Āsandī*, sitting on a throne, as one of the characteristics of the *Samrāt*.² In the course of the *Vājapeya*, the sacrificer is called 'All-ruler.'³ Of the net result of the *Rājasūya* we are simply told that "by offering the *Rājasūya* he becomes king."⁴ Here, too, the performance of the *Vājapeya* perhaps implied some sort of suzerainty. In the later *Brāhmaṇas* both the sacrifices have been elaborated beyond all precedent. Even the *Rājasūya* is not a single independent ceremony but a series of consecutive rites occupying a year or so and requiring the services of numerous priests. A few of the significant details may be mentioned. Explaining one of the *Rājasūya* rites, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* remarks that the sacrificer is *Indra*,—he is *Indra* for a two-fold reason, namely, because he is a *Kṣatriya* and because he is a sacrificer."⁵ Elsewhere it identifies the sacrificer with the god *Prajāpati*.⁶ In the course of the *Rājasūya*, the sacrificer shoots from a distance. "And as to why a *Rājanya* shoots, he, the *Rājanya*, is the visible representative of *Prajāpati*: hence, while being one, he rules over many."⁷ The *Vājapeya* equates the sacrificer with *Brihaspati*. "All ruler is he, N. N." says the priest. "All-ruler is he, N. N. Him, thus

¹ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V, 1, 1, 3, 13-14.

² *Ibid.*, XII, 8, 3, 4.

³ *Ibid.*, V, 2, 2, 14-5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 1, 1, 12.

⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 4, 3, 4. See also V, 1, 4, 2; 2, 5, 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 2, 24; 3, 4, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 1, 5, 14.

indicated, he thereby indicates to the gods. Of mighty power is he who has been consecrated, he has become one of yours; protect him."¹ Again, in the course of the Vājapeya, the Adhvaryu spreads out the goat-skin with the words, 'This is thy kingship.' Thus he endows the king "with royal power. He (the Adhvaryu) then makes him sit down, with the words, 'Thou art the ruler, the ruling lord' whereby he makes him the ruler, ruling over those subjects of his;——'Thou art firm and steadfast!', whereby he makes him firm and steadfast in this world;——'Thee for the tilling!——Thee for peaceful dwelling!——Thee for wealth!——Thee for thrift!' whereby he means to say, (here I seat) thee for the welfare (of the people)."² As in the Atharvaveda various kinds of waters are taken for the sprinkling.³ Some symbolic rites are mentioned. A tiger-skin is spread in front of the Maitravaruṇa's hearth.⁴ The sacrificer makes a short chariot race,⁵ touches a cow as arranged, and stops amid the cows of his relations.⁶ He puts on shoes of boar's skin, because the boar had been produced by the gods putting a pot of ghee on the fire.⁷ Looking down upon the earth he mutters, "O mother Earth! injure me not, nor I thee." This is done, lest the earth should shake him off.⁸ In the course of a sort of dialogue with the priests around in succession, the king is addressed by them as Brāhmaṇa, and also as Savitṛi 'of true impulsion,' Varuṇa 'of true power,' Indra 'mighty through the people,' Rudra 'the most kindly.'⁹ The Adhvaryu hands over the wooden sacrificial sword to him with these words, "Indra's thunderbolt

¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa V, 2, 2, 14-15.

² Ibid., V, 2, 1, 24.

³ Ibid., V, 3, 4, 3-28.

⁴ Ibid., V, 3, 5, 3, 4, 1, 11.

⁵ Ibid., V, 4, 3, 5-9.

⁶ Ibid., V, 4, 3, 15-18.

⁷ Ibid., V, 4, 3, 19.

⁸ Ibid., V, 4, 3, 20.

⁹ Ibid., V, 4, 4, 9-13.

thou art: therewith serve me." With the same words, the sword is passed on by the king to his brother, thence to the Sâta, finally to the Grâmani. "And as to why they mutually hand it on in this way, they do so lest there should be a confusion of classes and in order that society may be in the proper order."¹ The Ratnins, as these personages are called, are asked to a symbolic game of dice, the bet being a cow brought by an ordinary man.²

There are other sacrifices of which the significance is not perfectly clear but which seem to imply some sort of suzer-

ainty. In the Aitareya Brâhmaṇa

Other sacrifices. the Punarabhiṣeka or the second consecration entitles a king to all sorts of royal dignities.³ There Janamejaya aspires to universal dominion.⁴ The Sarvamedha, mentioned in the Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, was another grand sacrifice.⁵ All consecration, however, was of great moment. Performed in other connections, it made Vaiśyas equal to Brâhmaṇas for the time being. All who underwent it were at least temporarily equal to gods.⁶

In the Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, at the time
The office of of the consecration, the king takes an
the king. oath as follows:—

"Between the night I am born and the night I die, whatever good I might have done, my heaven, my life, and my progeny, may I be deprived of, if I oppress you."⁷

At the same time, however, the idea of proprietorship in the kingdom is gaining ground. In the Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upaniṣad, a king offers himself and his kingdom to Yâjñavalkya.⁸ Another passage in the Aitareya Brâhmaṇa

¹ Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, V, 4, 4, 15—19.

² Ibid., V, 4, 4, 20—25.

³ Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, VIII, 5—10.

⁴ Ibid., VIII, 11.

⁵ Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, XIII, 7, 1.

⁶ Ibid., III, 1, 1, 8; 2, 1, 17; 2, 1, 39—40.

⁷ Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, VIII, 15.

⁸ Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV, 4, 23.

shows that the hereditary succession was firmly established.¹

That kings were generally Kṣatriyas is abundantly clear. A passage in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa even bars the kingly office to Brāhmaṇas. The

The caste of kings. Kṣatra takes no delight in the priestly office and the Brahma takes no delight in the rank of rulership.² There is no evidence in Vedic literature for the contests between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas for supremacy which a few modern scholars believed to have occurred on the basis of some later legends and passages.³ There is, however, one passage in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa which seems to suggest that non-Kṣatriya kingship was not altogether unknown. King Marutta Āvikṣita is called Āyogava,⁴ which, according to the later testimony of Manu, is a mixed caste resulting from the union of Śūdras with Vaiśya wives.⁵

In accordance with the general trend of development, the Purohita has now become more important than ever.

He and the members of his order must be kept constantly in good humour. Even a powerful king like Janamejaya was humbled by Brāhmaṇas.⁶ The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa would exempt Brāhmaṇas from taxes.⁷ The dictum is reiterated with such complete unanimity through the succeeding ages. The same Brāhmaṇa expounds the dogma of the joint rule of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas over the people,⁸ though elsewhere it restricts them to their several functions.⁹ In one passage it derives the kingly power from

¹ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VIII, 12.

² Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIII, 1, 5, 2, 3, 5.

³ Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Part I, Ch. III.

⁴ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, XIII, 5, 4, 6.

⁵ Manu, X, 12.

⁶ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, III, 4, 1, 7.

⁷ Ibid., XIII, 6, 2, 18; 7, 1, 13.

⁸ Ibid., XI, 2, 7, 6.

⁹ Ibid., XIII, 1, 5, 2-3.

that of the priest.¹ It is the royal priest who secures the fall of rain for the crops, says the *Rigveda* in its tenth *Maṇḍala*.² The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* declares that the *Purohita* is half the *Kṣatriya*; he is indispensable to the success of royal enterprise. He is the *Rāṣṭragopa*, protector of the kingdom. Along with his wife and son, he is the three-fold sacred fire for the king. If propitiated, he blesses the king with dignity, valour and dominion and ultimately secures him heavenly grace. If he is displeased, he hurls ruin and destruction on the realm.³ To quote the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, again, the *Śrotriya* or the learned *Brāhmaṇa* and the king are joint "upholders of the sacred law among men."⁴

Besides the *Purohita*, the king had a number of attendants, *sūtas* (heralds), *grāmaṇis* (headmen),—non-royal kingmakers as they are sometimes called, who formed his entourage.⁵

Justice in which the assembly had so far taken a prominent share, now becomes ever more a royal prerogative.

At the same time the king is declared immune from punishment. "For *Varuṇa Dharmapati* (lord of the law)," says the *Justice.*

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, "he then prepares a *Varuṇa* pap of barley, thereby *Varuṇa*, the lord of the law, makes him lord of the law; and that truly is the supreme state, when one is lord of the law; for whoever attains to the supreme state, to him they come in (matters of law): therefore to

¹ *Ibid.*, XII, 7, 3, 12.

² *Rigveda*, X, 98.

³ *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 26; VIII, 24—27. *Vedic Index*, II, 584, 223.

⁴ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V, 4, 4, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XII, 9, 3; XIII, 2, 2, 18.

Varuṇa Dharmapati."¹ The Chândogya Upaniṣad speaks of fire-ordeals and other tests for establishing the innocence of the accused who might plead not guilty, but one cannot be sure of the date of the particular passage. It regards murder, theft, adultery and drunkenness as the most heinous of crimes.²

Taxation seems to increase during this age. Probably the expenses of government had increased. In the Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa the king is several times regarded as devouring the people.³ References to Bali or tribute are of frequent occurrence.⁴

During this period the assembly is occasionally referred to. In the Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa it seems to take cognisance of currency, of coins such as Kṛiṣṇâla and Niṣka.⁵ The Chândogya Upaniṣad mentions the Samiti of the Pañcâlas as presided over by king Pravâhaṇa Jaivali.⁶ But the assembly is now less and less in evidence. It is no longer a regular organ of deliberation or justice. Such a change, in fact, was inevitable with the increase in the size of states and the further progress of the feudal tendency. While the king would gain more and more in power, the people would find it more and more difficult to come together.

¹ Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, V, 3, 3, 9. The White Yajurveda (X, 27) contains exhortations to equal justice and beneficent protection.

² Chândogya Upaniṣad, VI, 16.

³ Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, I, 8, 2, 17; IV, 2, 1, 3, 17; V, 3, 3, 12; 4, 2, 3; X, 6, 2, 1; XIII, 2, 9, 6, 8, etc.

⁴ Ibid., I, 3, 2, 15; 5, 3, 18; 6, 3, 7, etc. Aitareya Brâhmaṇa, VII, 29. Vedic Index, II, 62.

⁵ Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, XII, 7, 2, 13; XIII, 1, 1, 47. Originally niṣka seems to have been a gold or silver ornament. Later, it denoted a gold coin.

⁶ Chândogya Upaniṣad, V, 3, 1.

At the same time the idea of Dharma as a moral check on despotism emerges more clearly. The Śatapatha

Brāhmaṇa wants the king to uphold the sacred law, "for he is not capable of all Dharma. (of) and every speech, nor of all and every

deed, but that he should speak only what is right, and do what is right....."¹ The Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upaniṣad says that "Dharma is the Kṣatra of the Kṣatra; therefore, there is nothing higher than Dharma. Thenceforth even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of Dharma as with the help of a king. Thus Dharma is what is called the true."² The term Dharma or Dharman defies translation. It covers the whole range and complex of settled principles and forms of conduct. Law, ideal rather than positive, is one of the senses in which it is used. Ancient Hindus never clearly distinguished between religious and moral duty, usage or customary observance.

¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, V, 4, 4, 5.

² Bṛihadâraṇyaka Upaniṣad, I, 4, 11—15. See also Chândogya Upaniṣad, II, 23. 1-2. Cf. the later philosopher Kaṇâda who defines Dharma as the source of welfare and salvation (V aiśeṣika Sūtras, I, 1-2).

CHAPTER IV.

Gleanings from the Sûtras.

(500—100 B.C.)

After the Brâhmanas and the earlier Upaniṣads, the Sûtras stand out as the next important class of literature. In ancient India learning was generally cultivated in schools and the results arrived at were given the stamp of schools which were often attached to various Vedic sects. Such schools seem to have arisen all over the country by the sixth or fifth century B.C. By this time the Âryans had overspread the whole of northern India and penetrated far into the south. The wider their geographical distribution, the greater were the differences of doctrine, law, custom and ceremonial among them. The Sûtras, though agreeing in certain fundamentals, display innumerable differences of detail. The 'threads,' as the term means, are extremely thin. They represent the very acme of concision which too often renders them obscure and dreary. Nevertheless, they do in a large measure simplify and systematise the complicated theology and ritual of the Brâhmanas. Broadly speaking, they fall into three classes, or rather aspects, the Śranta, Grihya and Dharma—the sacrificial, domestic and legal. A complete collection, a Kalpa Sûtra, should comprise all the three but many of them have perished and, generally, each body of Sûtra stands independent of others. Their fundamental object is the same—the regulation of human life. Their full and detailed instructions show the great place which authority occupied in the direction of the Hindu mind. In general, they fall between the sixth and second

centuries before Christ but the exact date of each can not be determined. Bühler placed the Dharma Sūtras, which from our point of view are the most important, between the sixth and third centuries B.C. and formulated a chronological order—Gautama, Baudhāyana, Vasiṣṭha and Āpastamba. Jolly assigns Gautama and Baudhāyana to the sixth or fifth century B.C., and Vasiṣṭha and Āpastamba to the fifth or fourth century B.C. Jayaswal would attribute the first forms of the Sūtras to about 500 B.C., but in their present shape he would place Gautama at 350 B.C., Baudhāyana at 240 B.C. and Vasiṣṭha at 100 B.C. Hopkins thinks that "probably the Grīhyas represent the earlier Sūtras; the Dharmas as a whole come later, perhaps 300 B.C. would represent the earliest." Āpastamba, he concludes, "probably is not older than the second century B.C.," while Vasiṣṭha is even later. It is again probable that many of the Sūtras were recast subsequently, and that their text has been frequently tampered with to bring them into harmony with the later Dharma Śāstras. Gautama, in fact, is known as a Dharma Śāstra. Only roughly can the Sūtras be held to reflect the life of the period from 500 to 100 B.C. during which they arose. It will be a mistake to compare the Dharma Sūtras or the later Dharma Śāstras, as Sir William Jones compared Manu, to the Institutes of Justinian. The Hindu texts do not embody any system of positive law and represent no real system of jurisprudence. They are manuals of conduct, of ideal morality or law. Besides, they are pre-eminently the product of priestly brains and tend to look at life from a narrow standpoint.

From this body of literature, extensive as it is, it is possible to obtain only a few glimpses of the actual structure and working of contemporary political institutions. Among

Gleanings from
Śrauta Sūtras.

the best known of the Śrauta Sūtras are the two belonging to the Rīgveda—the Śāṅkhāyana and the Āśvalāyana. The followers of the former Carana or school were later settled in northern Gujarāt and those of the latter in the south between the Godāvarī and the Kṛṣṇā.¹ But the beginnings of the Sūtras themselves lie probably in the north. Both describe the complicated ceremonies of the various royal consecrations, the Śāṅkhāyana at greater length than the other. Its account of the Rājastūya is a turgid elaboration of the description in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. In the course of it occurs the interesting statement that "it is Varuṇa whom they consecrate."² It enumerates seven kings—four of them being Pāriksitas—who performed the Āśvamedha sacrifice.³ The Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, the accepted manual of the Kauthuma school attached to the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, remarks that "whomsoever the Brāhmaṇas and Rājāṇaḥ (kings or nobles) may place at their head, let him perform the Vājapeya."⁴ From this it may be inferred that any ruler could perform the Vājapeya and that the ceremonies had lost their characteristic value at least in some places. The Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra which belongs to the white Yajurveda and, on the whole, strictly follows the order of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, clearly distinguishes between Rājya and Sāmrajya, and lays down that the Rājastūya is to be performed by a king who has not yet performed the Vājapeya.⁵ On the other hand, the Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra rules that "after performing it (the Vājapeya), let a king perform the Rājastūya....."⁶ The Āpastamba Śrauta

¹ Macdonell, History of Sanskrit Literature, pp. 244-45.

² Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, XV, 13, 4. See also XV, 1, 11.

³ Ibid., XVI, 9.

⁴ Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, VIII, 11, 1. Also IX 11-3, for the Rājastūya.

⁵ Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, XV, 1, 1-2.

⁶ Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra, IX, 3, 3 to IX, 4, 23. Also IX, 9, 11 for the Vājapeya.

Sûtra, which belongs to the Black Yajurveda, would restrict the *Aśvamedha* to the *Sārvabhauma Rājā* or universal monarch. It records an interesting rite in the course of which the *Adhvaryu* was temporarily reckoned as sovereign. "He (the king) hands over the kingdom to the *Adhvaryu*, and says, 'O *Brāhmaṇas* and princes, this *Adhvaryu* is your king; whatever loyal respect is due to me, the same from you may be shown to him, whatever he does by you (or to you), the same shall be considered as authoritatively done to you.' As long as the sacrifice lasts, the *Adhvaryu* becomes the king."¹ The *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sûtra* which also belongs to the Black Yajurveda and which is older than the *Āpastamba* gives a slightly different version. "Here (in the *Aśvamedha*) those who anoint a *Kṣatra* as the king anoint the *Adhvaryu* (in his stead). He (the *Kṣatriya* king) says—'O *Brāhmaṇas* and princes, the *Adhvaryu* will be the king these two years; obey him; whoever does not obey him, the whole property of him they will confiscate.' Accordingly, the *Adhvaryu* is the king these two years."² Whether the *Brāhmaṇa* sacrificial agent ever actually exercised political authority in the interregnum is more than doubtful, but these details furnish a graphic idea of the political importance and prestige of the priesthood. The *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sûtra* also reveals the tremendous significance attached to the *Aśvamedha*. None was to meddle with its progress. For instance, if any one, in disregard of the royal proclamation, let out mares to meet the wandering sacrificial horse, he was to be punished with confiscation of property.³ Incidentally, we learn that confiscation of property was now the recognised penalty for disobedience to the royal command.

¹ *Āpastamba Śrauta Sûtra*, XX, 2, 12, 3, 1-2. See also XVIII, 1, 1; 8, 22.

² *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sûtra*, XV, 4.

³ *Ibid.*, XV, 8.

Next to the Śrauta Sūtras stand the Grihya Sūtras. Nothing can exceed the minuteness with which they dilate on domestic ritual but they rarely extend

The Grihya Sūtras. their scope beyond it. Incidentally, the

Pāraskara Grihya Sūtra would grant autonomy to villages in private matters and family concerns.¹ No outside interference is needed. Here, probably, the Sūtra is more or less true to facts. The Parāśara Grihya Sūtra has an arresting statement. It declares that royalty does not depend on hereditary right, but on acquisition by the sword.² It points to an age of chronic warfare and political disturbance.³ Caste is firmly entrenched in the Sūtras. For instance, in the Grihya Sūtra of Gobhila, there are caste distinctions in fetching fire.³

It is the Dharma Sūtras which are of real interest to the student of society and politics. Caste is fully developed in

The Dharma Sūtras. all of them. So, too, the Āsramadharmas which divides the life of a twice-born man—a member of any of the three higher castes—into four stages, studentship, household, retirement and renunciation. All the Dharma Sūtras and, following them, the Dharma Śāstras, want the scheme of the duties of the four castes and four stages to be enforced by the government. It is, however, remarkable that all of them recognise two sorts of punishments for many sins, one to be inflicted by the government, and the other, a penance rather than a regular punishment, to be undergone by the sinner voluntarily or to be forced on him by those who wish him well in this, and particularly, in the next life. So, the sanctions, to use a modern term, are both civil and spiritual. It is sometimes difficult to say to which class a writer attaches greater importance. Gautama and Baudhāyana

¹ Pāraskara Grihya Sūtra, I, 8, 13.

² Parāśara Grihya Sūtra, I, 68.

Gobhila Grihya Sūtra, I, 1, 15-16.

lend colour to the hypothesis that a system of penances, voluntary and enforced, was the earliest Hindu way of promoting virtue and punishing sin and that justice in the modern sense of the term was introduced only later. Sir Henry Maine supposed that rules of conduct were first worked out by priestly lawyers who later addressed themselves to the kingly power to have them enforced.¹ The facts, as known, do not support Maine's theory. From the prominence of penances in the Dharmasāstras and Purāṇas, it appears that civil and spiritual jurisdictions in moral life ran concurrently.

The school of the Gautamas represented by the earliest of the extant Dharma Sātra compendiums, is a Carāṇa of the Sāmaveda.² It arose somewhere in the north. While basing his ethics on caste, Gautama makes some concessions to meet the exigencies of practical life. In distress, that is to say, in emergencies, a Brāhmaṇa may study under a non-Brāhmaṇa, and may follow the occupation of a Kṣatriya and, failing that, of a Vaiśya. In the last contingency he is to refrain from dealing in certain articles, though in the last extremity even these restrictions may be disregarded. Gautama would not like a Brāhmaṇa to follow Śādra occupations under any circumstances, but he admits that some had permitted even this when life was in danger.³ In self-defence, a Brāhmaṇa may always use arms.⁴ Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, too, may, in emergencies, follow lower occupations.⁵ In a later chapter he permits

¹ Maine, *Ancient Law and Custom*, pp. 43-44.

² Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, *Tantravārtika*, (Benāres edition), p. 179. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 374. Bühler, *Introduction to Gautama*, p. L.

³ Gautama, VII, 1—24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 25.

⁵ *Ibid.*, VII, 26.

a Brâhmana to practise usury, agriculture or trade, "provided he does not do the work himself."¹ It may be assumed that orthodox writers would make these concessions only when compelled by the force of facts. It is clear that rules of caste, while recognised in theory by all, were not uniformly observed. In Gautama, the status of Śūdras tends to approximate to serfdom or slavery. A Śūdra should obtain his livelihood only from the higher castes,² eat the remnants of their food³ and use their cast-off shoes, umbrellas, garments and mats.⁴ He must support his master, in case of distress, with any savings of his own.⁵ On the other hand, he must be supported by his master even when no longer able to work.⁶ A regular family life is permitted to him,⁷ but all intellectual cultivation and participation in the higher spiritual life is denied to him. Only by permission can he use the exclamation, namaḥ (adoration), as his mantra.⁸ "If he (a Śūdra) listens, intentionally, to (a recitation) of the Veda, his ears shall be filled with (molten) tin or lac.⁹ If he recites (Vedic texts), his tongue shall be cut out.¹⁰ If he remembers them, his body shall be split in twain."¹¹ There is no evidence to show how far such maxims were actually carried out. It may be that the Brâhmanas are painting themselves worse than they actually were. But it is clear that the position of the Śūdras was very hard. It seems that the Śūdras did not always accept their prescribed lot. Gautama invokes the might of the government to enforce

¹ Ibid., X, 5-6.

² Ibid., X, 57.

³ Ibid., X, 59.

⁴ Ibid., X, 58.

⁵ Ibid., X, 62.

⁶ Ibid., X, 61.

⁷ Ibid., X, 54, 55.

⁸ Ibid., X, 64.

⁹ Ibid., XII, 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., XII, 5.

¹¹ Ibid., XII, 6.

the social order. He is deeply concerned to maintain the supremacy of Dvijas, the twice-born, and to keep Śādras to the lowest place. "If he (a Śādra) assumes a position equal to that of twice-born men in sitting, in lying down, in conversation or on the road, he shall undergo corporal punishment."¹

In his eleventh chapter Gautama enunciates his maxims on government.² His theory Government. lends itself to a few inferences about the contemporary state of things. His precepts would fit only a small state. The state in which he lived was either very small or a small feudatory of a big one. In any case, it was a whole by itself. Gautama wants the king to learn the use of the bow and the management of chariots and to stand firm in battle.³ He pictures the king seated on a high pedestal surrounded by his subjects who occupy lower seats.⁴ In Gautama⁵ and other Brahmanical writers, the Purohita is an institution by himself. Later epigraphic testimony helps the conclusion that a king usually had a high priest. There were also other priests at the court for the performance of Vedic sacrifices.⁶ When we are told that the king is the master of all except Brāhmaṇas,⁷ and that he shall be worshipped by all except Brāhmaṇas,⁸ it is legitimate to infer that the Brāhmaṇas occupied a privileged position, though the extent of the privilege was, doubtless, exaggerated by priestly law-givers. Gautama wants that Brāhmaṇas who are versed in sacred lore and live up to its precepts, should be exempted by the king from corporal punishment, imprisonment, fines,

¹ Ibid., XII, 7.

² Ibid., Chapter XI, in particular 1, 5-8, 11-14.

³ Ibid., X, 7-12.

⁶ Ibid., XI, 18.

⁴ Ibid., XI, 7.

⁷ Ibid., XI, 1.

⁵ Ibid., XI, 12.

⁸ Ibid., XI, 7.

exile, censure and disgrace.¹ Here is an extensive claim to the 'benefit of clergy' but we do not know how far it was admitted in practice. Brâhmanas acted as counsellors of the sovereign. "For it is declared (in the Veda): 'Kṣatriyas, who are assisted by Brâhmanas, prosper and do not fall into distress.'"² From their ranks, too, were drawn the astrologers and interpreters of omens who seem to have been attached to Hindu courts all through history. Gautama states the opinion of those who declared that 'the acquisition of wealth and security depends upon taking heed of those readers of supernatural influences.'³

In Gautama, as in other Hindu writers, the king is expected personally to administer justice, and to enforce the sacred law. But they all admit the validity of local or group custom. In spite of his ultra-orthodox leanings, Gautama recognised that "the laws of countries, castes and families which are not opposed to the (sacred) records, (have) also authority."⁴ Again, "cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders, and artisans (have authority to lay down rules) for their respective classes."⁵ Having learnt the (state of) affairs from those who (in each class) have authority (to speak), the king shall give the legal decision.⁶ Gautama thus grants legislative powers to groups or associations of men. It is more than probable that the followers of various occupations regulated part of their life and transactions by the customs which had spontaneously arisen among them and by the rules which were enunciated to meet any contingencies. It is again probable, as the text of Gautama suggests, that in the enforcement of these

¹ Ibid., VIII, 7-13.

² Ibid., XI, 14.

³ Ibid., XI, 15-16.

⁴ Ibid., XI, 20.

⁵ Ibid., XI, 21.

⁶ Ibid., XI, 22.

rules and customs, the royal judicial machinery had a share. A priestly law-giver would necessarily add that these regulations were to be enforced only when not opposed to the Scriptures, but in practice the force of local custom might have proved irresistible. It is significant that cultivators are mentioned among self-regulating groups. In practice it would mean that a village should enjoy a good deal of autonomy. A few provisions concerning agriculture are interesting. Unenclosed pasture-lands were to be used for grazing cattle and for firewood.¹ If cattle damaged fields or crops, the responsibility fell on the herdsman if he happened to be with them, otherwise on their owner.² But if the field damaged was unenclosed, its owner was held partly responsible.³

Gautama makes it abundantly clear that during his time witnesses were usually summoned in a case⁴ and

Witnesses. that some rules had been framed to determine the admissibility of their

evidence in particular cases.⁵ But his elaborate prescriptions on the character, qualifications and disqualifications of witnesses are so purely theoretical as to warrant no inference about actual practice. Gautama's Twelfth Chapter, on Civil and Criminal Law, is full of details, but is not a statement of positive law. He seems to supply the model which

Caste and Justice.

he would like a code of law to follow. But it is permissible to infer from him that caste privilege had invaded public justice at innumerable points and that for the same offences different punishments were inflicted on members of different castes. The lot of a Śādra might have been really hard.

¹ Ibid., XII, 28.

² Ibid., XII, 19-20.

³ Ibid., XII, 21.

⁴ Ibid., XIII, 1.

⁵ Ibid., Ch. XIII.

To take a single instance, "a Śūdra who intentionally reviles twice-born men by criminal abuse, or criminally assaults them with blows, shall be deprived of the limb with which he offends."¹

Gautama, like Vasiṣṭha, prescribes five māṣas for twenty kârṣāpaṇas as the rate of interest which, according to the commentator Haradatta, works out to 15 p.c. per annum.² For some articles, however, such as gold and flavouring substances, Gautama admits higher rates of interest.³ He recognises no less than six forms of interest, *viz.*, compound interest, periodical interest, stipulated interest, corporal interest, daily interest and the use of the pledged article.⁴ He remarks that when the principal has been doubled, interest ceases and that when the article pledged is used by the creditor, the loan bears no interest at all.⁵

Gautama's precepts on taxation probably bear some relation to facts. The land-tax Revenue. should be one-sixth, one-eighth or one-tenth of the gross produce.⁶ One-sixth was the standard fixed by Hindu theory in ancient India. It will appear that the land-tax was always supplemented by others. "Some declare that (there is a tax) also on cattle and gold, *viz.*, one-fiftieth of the stock."⁷ On merchandise, $\frac{1}{20}$ th was to be paid as duty; on roots, fruits, flowers, medicinal herbs, honey, meat, grass and firewood, $\frac{1}{80}$ th.⁸ Besides, a merchant should give the king every month one article of merchandise for less than the market value.⁹ Even

¹ Ibid., XII, 1-2.

² Gautama, XII, 29. Vasiṣṭha, II, 51. Cf. Manu, VII, 140.

³ Gautama, XII, 36, 44-47.

⁴ Ibid., XII, 34-35.

⁵ Ibid., XII, 31-32.

⁶ Ibid., X, 24.

⁷ Ibid., X, 25.

⁸ Ibid., X, 26-27.

⁹ Ibid., X, 35.

those who had nothing to give should make some contribution. Gautama wants every artisan to contribute a day's labour to the service of the king.¹ In addition to all this, treasure-trove should belong to the king.² The sources of revenue and the rates fixed are likely to have obtained in practice. Gautama, like all other Hindu writers, holds that the justification of taxation was the protection which the king afforded to all and sundry.³ This is probably a correct representation of the public feeling of those days but there was no constitutional means of enforcing the duty of protection.

Besides the protection and promotion of righteous life with which government is charged, Gautama prescribes specific relief measures which a king is likely to have undertaken in an informal manner. He must support needy students, Brâhmaṇas, Śrotriyas, all who are unable to work.* A Hindu court might well have been a centre of charity.

Many of the social and political ideas of Gautama are to be found in other Sûtra composers but the latter also present something peculiar to each.

Baudhâyana. Baudhâyana's school belonged probably to the south, where much later, Śāyana, the great Vedic commentator, was a member of it. A reference to sea-borne commerce points in the same direction.⁵ The fourth section of the Baudhâyana Dharma Sûtra is probably a late addition, while the date of the third is doubtful. The first two sections alone can be utilised for the Sûtra period. He preserves a record of the old theory of wergild which is likely to have been

¹ Ibid., X, 31.

² Ibid., X, 43.

³ Ibid., X, 28.

⁴ Ibid., X, 7-12.

⁵ Baudhâyana, I, 10, 18, 14.

grounded partly in the facts of some remote epoch. For slaying a Kṣatriya one should give a thousand cows besides a bull; for slaying a Śûdra, ten cows and a bull. Then in priestly contempt of Śûdras, Baudhâya adds that the fine for killing a flamingo, a pea-cock, a crow, an owl, a frog, a musk-rat, a dog, etc., etc., is the same as for killing a Śûdra.¹ Baudhâya, however, knows of state courts and judges. He specifies three sources of law—the Vedas, Smṛitis or sacred tradition and the example of Śiṣṭas—personages who combine moral excellence with mastery of Vedic and subsidiary studies and powers of ratiocination. Failing them, doubtful points of law should be submitted to an assembly of ten, comprising four scholars, each a master of one of the four Vedas, a Mîmāṃsaka, a scholar acquainted with the Aṅgas, a reciter of the sacred law, and three Brâhmaṇas, belonging to three different orders. Failing such an assembly, points of law might be referred to five, three or a single blameless man but never to a thousand fools. A little later, however, he adds that narrow and difficult is the path of the sacred law, that many gates lead to it and that a doubt can never be resolved by a single person, "howsoever learned he may be."² Details apart, it is probable that a paṇiṣad or committee of this type was constituted to give what may be called a jurisconsultum. It might be dominated by priestly lawyers but its constitution would depend on the king, who could 'pack' it at will. It could form a machinery for what must be pronounced a species of legislative business. The sphere of any such body, however, would be strictly limited. Like others, Baudhâya declares that local customs and opinions, varying in different regions, should be respected.³ As might be expected, caste privilege enters

¹ Ibid., I, 10, 19, 1—6.

² Ibid., I, 1, 1, 1—10, 12.

³ Ibid., 1, 1, 1, 2, 1—9.

Baudhâyana's judicial system at many points. He would exempt Brâhmaṇas from corporal punishment but he adds that Brâhmaṇas who tend cattle, practise agriculture or who live as artizans, actors, usherers or servants should be treated as Śûdras. It will appear that the caste-law of occupations was often violated and that its violation sometimes implied a forfeiture of the privileges which it conferred.¹ Like Gautama, Baudhâyana summons witnesses and prescribes their qualifications, etc.² Baudhâyana's fiscal system deserves a word of notice. He prescribes one-sixth of the gross produce of the land as

the due of the state. On goods imported
Revenue. by sea, a ten per cent. duty should be

charged, "after deducting a choice article." Here the theorist might be reproducing facts. He declares that the duties on marketable goods should be fixed according to their intrinsic value and that the traders should never be oppressed.³ It is probable that the state-demand varied from

article to article. Turning to the law of
The law of war. war, Baudhâyana holds that no king

should ever use barbed or poisoned weapons. Nor should he strike women, infants, old men, Brâhmaṇas, those who are insane, intoxicated, terrified or who have lost their armour. From this humanitarian rule, only assassins are excepted.⁴ The statement is interesting as the first clear Hindu view of the ethics of war but we cannot be sure that it represents practical politics.

¹ On the whole subject of caste and caste-privilege in Baudhâyana, see I, 10, 18, 2-6; I, 10, 18, 18-20; I, 10, 19, 1-5; I, 5, 10, 23-25; II, 6, 11, 12-16. In prescribing relaxations of these rules (II, 2, 4, 16-20), Baudhâyana contradicts himself.

² Ibid., I, 10, 19, 7-16 *et seq.*

³ Baudhâyana, I, 10, 18, 1, 14-15.

⁴ Ibid., I, 1, 10, 18, 10-13.

The Dharma Sûtra of the Âpastambas, which forms the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sections of the Âpastamba Kalpa Sûtra, seems to have arisen in the south,¹ probably in the Ândhra country. Âpastamba admits no absolute finality in law or morality. He confesses that ancient sages had transgressed the present code of morality and law but adds that they had incurred no sin "on account of the greatness of their lustre" and that none could follow them now with impunity.² It is clear that there was no permanent, immutable, universal law. It varied from time to time and, doubtless, from place to place. A few details of Âpastamba on kingly duties are interesting. The king should build a town with its gates looking towards the south. In the heart of the town should stand the royal palace with its gates facing the south. In front of it should be a hall, called the hall of invitation, a sort of guest-house. At a short distance towards the south should be erected an assembly-house, with doors on the north and south, to serve, *inter alia*, as a 'gaming-house' for the 'pure and truthful' members of the three higher castes. In the palace, in the hall and in the assembly house, fires should be kept burning and daily oblations offered.³ Here the law-giver is probably following some existing model. It is noteworthy that gambling was no sin in those days and was even provided for. The state looked more to the needs and amusements of Dvijas than to those of Sûdras.

Âpastamba makes it perfectly clear that a regular system of local government had grown up by his time. He mentions village and town-officers. The jurisdiction of a town-officer covers a radius of a yojana (nearly eight miles) and that of a village officer a radius of a kos, nearly two miles. Within

¹ Âpastamba, II, 17, 17, where he speaks of a practice of the Northerners in a way which only a Southerner would do.

² Âpastamba, II, 6, 13, 8-10.

³ Ibid., II, 10, 25, 2-13,

the area of his jurisdiction, an officer should be responsible for order and security and should himself recompense unaccounted thefts. The officers, according to Āpastamba, should be drawn from the first three castes.¹ The injunction does not square with the strict theory of caste and is not likely to have found a place in a Dharma Sūtra if something like it had not been followed in actual practice.

Āpastamba's exemptions from taxation are interesting.

Revenue. Brāhmaṇas, women, minors, students, ascetics, the blind, the deaf, the diseased, and Śūdras who live by washing the feet of others need pay nothing to the state.² The maxim may be based partly on facts. On the other hand, on failure of heirs, all property escheats to the king.³

Āpastamba's disquisition on civil and criminal law is as minute as that of the other legal writers, but there is no evidence to show which of his provisions are based on facts. It is safe to conclude that caste had vitiated jurisprudence and that the Śūdras fared worst of all.⁴ For the rest only a few maxims need be noted. Āpastamba would exact full damages from a man who does not cultivate his lease of land. If he is rich enough, he must be forced to pay to the state the value of the crop which should have reared on his fields.⁵ A servant in tillage who abandons his work shall be flogged.⁶ The same punishment should be awarded to a herdsman who forsakes his work.⁷ The flock entrusted to him shall be taken away.⁸ The owner of cattle may impound trespassing cattle.⁹ In warfare, Āpastamba prohibits the slaughter of fugitives, of

¹ Ibid., II, 10, 26, 6—8.

² Ibid., II, 10, 26, 10—17.

³ Ibid., II, 6, 14, 5. For inheritance in general, II, 6, 14, 1—13.

⁴ Ibid., II, 10, 27.

⁵ Ibid., II, 11, 28, 1.

⁶ Ibid., II, 11, 28, 2.

⁷ Ibid., II, 11, 28, 3.

⁸ Ibid., II, 11, 28, 4.

⁹ Ibid., II, 11, 28, 5.

those who have surrendered, and of those who beg for mercy with flying hair or joined palms.¹ It may be mentioned in passing that the law-giver wants the king to support and protect women who had been cruelly wronged by wicked men.²

The Dharma Sûtra of Vasiṣṭha arose in the north. Long afterwards, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa stated that Vasiṣṭha was

studied only by followers of the Rîgveda

Vasiṣṭha.

but that it was generally recognised as authoritative. On caste, as on many other topics, he is in line with other Dharma Sâtras.³ He wants the king to enforce the provisions of caste, but he also lays down, like Gautama, that respect should be paid to all the laws of countries, castes and families.⁴ So not even in theory is social life to be regulated and controlled entirely by the state. For the king, Vasiṣṭha has the usual precepts. A Purohita is, of course, essential to the king's welfare.⁵ It is for fiscal arrangements that Vasiṣṭha is peculiarly valuable. The land-tax and mercantile tolls are to be supplemented by a monthly levy from artisans.⁶ "No taxes shall be paid on the usufruct of rivers, dry grass, forests (places of combustion) and mountains,⁷ or those who draw their sustenance from them may pay something."⁸ The law-giver speaks with a divided voice but he gives a clear indication of certain fresh sources of revenue which a government is very likely to have tapped. The king is to provide maintenance to eunuchs and lunatics⁹ and inherit their property.¹⁰ In general, on failure of heirs,

¹ Ibid., II, 5, 10, 11.

² Ibid., II, 10, 26, 22—24. For a few other political ideas, I, 6, 19, 10—12; I, 7, 21, 4; I, 10, 29, 6.

³ Vasiṣṭha, III, 24—25; I, 17; IV, 2; II, 40.

⁴ Ibid., XIX, 7—8.

⁵ Ibid., XIX, 3—5.

⁸ Ibid., XIX, 27.

⁶ Ibid., XIX, 28.

⁹ Ibid., XIX, 35.

⁷ Ibid., XIX, 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., XIX 36,

property goes to spiritual teachers or pupils ; failing them, to the king.¹ Elsewhere he remarks that property entirely given up by the owner goes to the king.² The theorist would not allow the escheat of a Brâhmana's property in any case but his very imprecations point to the breach of his precept in practice.³ He himself strongly objects to Brâhmanas subsisting by begging. "The king shall punish that village where Brâhmanas, unobservant of their sacred duties and ignorant of the Veda, subsist by begging, for it feeds robbers."⁴ To the list of exemptions from taxation given by Âpastamba, Vaśiṣṭha would add royal servants, wives of servants, young students, old men, unmarried girls, widows who have returned to parental homes and persons in general who have no protectors.⁵ On justice, warfare, diplomacy and other matters, Vaśiṣṭha follows the traditional line. He would admit three kinds of proof in cases of property, *viz.*, documents, witnesses and possession.⁶ In a dispute about a house or a field, the depositions of neighbours should be relied on.⁷ If they differ among themselves, documents should be resorted to.⁸ If the documents conflict with one another, the statements of the aged inhabitants of the place or of corporations should be decisive.⁹ A few miscellaneous provisions may be noticed. From fields through which there is a right of way, a space sufficient for a path and another sufficient for turning a cart should be set apart.¹⁰ In the vicinity of new buildings there should be a passage about three feet in breadth.¹¹ The property of widows, minors, etc., should be administered by the king.¹²

¹ Ibid., XVII, 81-83.

² Ibid., XVI, 19.

³ Ibid., XVII, 84-87.

⁴ Ibid., III, 4.

⁵ Ibid., XI X, 23-24.

⁶ Ibid., XVI, 10.

⁷ Ibid., XVI, 13.

⁸ Ibid., XVI, 14.

⁹ Ibid., XVI, 15.

¹⁰ Ibid., XVI, 17.

¹¹ Ibid., XVI, 12.

¹² Ibid., XVI, 8-9.

It is needless to notice the other Dharma Sūtras here. Viṣṇu, though in Sūtra form, is so heavily interpolated as to be a product of practically about the third century A.D. The Vaikhāṇasa

Other Dharma Sūtras. Dharma Sūtra, which represents one of the younger offshoots of the Taittiriya school, cannot be earlier than the third century A.D. Besides, it is in its four praśnas, only a treatise on domestic law. The Dharma Sūtra of Hiranyakeśin closely follows the Āpastambas from which that school probably derived its origin. It yields nothing fresh to the student of institutions. The Mānava Dharma Sūtra is lost to us, though its ideas may be imbedded in the later Smṛiti of Manu. The Dharma Sūtra of Śaṅkha-Likhita is referred to by Kumārila,¹ and is said to have been specially studied by the Vājasaneyins but it has not yet been discovered.

¹ Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Tantravārtika, p. 179.

CHAPTER V.

The Epics.

I.—THE BRIHADDEVATĀ.

About the fifth century B.C. was composed a work which, though not included in Śruti or revelation, bears a strong affinity to Vedic literature in spirit, though not in style. The Brihaddevatā, attributed to Śaunaka, is a summary of the deities and myths of the R̥gveda.¹ It assumes the form of an epic but, as Macdonell shows, it does not borrow from the Mahābhārata. It has one political reference of some interest. On the demise of a sovereign R̥ṣiṣeṇa, the subjects offer the sovereignty to his son Devāpi, who, however being afflicted with a skin disease, declines it, saying, "I am not worthy of the sovereignty ; let Saṁtānu, the younger prince, be your ruler."² It will appear that the kingship was avowedly hereditary, that the succession ordinarily went by the rule of primogeniture, that the subjects formally accepted a new king, that they even made a formal offer of the throne, that physical disability was a sufficient reason for departing from the ordinary rule of succession and that, next to the eldest prince,

¹ The Brihaddevatā has been edited and translated by A. A. Macdonell and published at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1904. Macdonell pronounces it later than 500 B.C., but earlier than Kātyāyana and in no case later than 400 B.C. (Introduction, pp. xxii-xxiii). See also Keith, J. R. A. S., 1906, pp. 1-3.

² Brihaddevatā, VII, 156-57; VIII, 1.

the younger had a presumptive title to the sceptre. Beyond this the Brihaddevatâ throws no light on institutions.¹

II.—THE MAHÂBHÂRATA.

The epic style which the Brihaddevatâ follows seems to have acquired vogue during the period which saw the composition of the Sûtras which are so entirely different in spirit and form. The

The Mahâbhâ-
rata.

Âśvalâyana Gṛihya Sûtra itself refers to Gâthâs, heroic tales and ancient legends, and mentions a Mahâbhârata, as well as a Bhârata.² The Śâmbavya Sûtra mentions the Mahâbhârata itself. The historical germ of the great Epic can be traced to the 10th century B.C.³ The sources of the literary epic lie in the traditional recitations of bards who probably were neither priests nor scholars.⁴ They were however recast and extensively added to for centuries. The chronological scheme proposed by Hopkins is the most acceptable of all that have been propounded. "We may tentatively assume as approximate dates of the whole work in its different stages. Bhârata (Kuru) lays, perhaps combined into one, but with no evidence of an epic before 400 B.C. A Mahâbhârata tale with Pându heroes, lays and legends combined by the Puranic diaskeuasts, Kṛiṣṇa as a demi-god (no evidence of didactic form or of Kṛiṣṇa's divine supremacy), 400—200 B.C. Remaking of the epic with Kṛiṣṇa as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter, addition of Puranic material old and new; multiplication of exploits, 200 B.C. to 100—200 A.D. The later books added with the

¹ In a note to VIII, 2, Macdonell notes that some Mss. read Râṣṭra for Râjya in the ordinary sense. It is clear that Râṣṭra did not yet possess the fiscal significance which it has in some later writers. Nor did it mean a province, as distinct from the whole kingdom.

² III, 3, 1.

³ Macdonell, History of Sanskrit Literature, p. 285. On the whole subject, pp. 277—86. See also Hopkins, J.A.O.S., XIII, pp. 68—69.

⁴ Hopkins, Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 220.

introduction to the first book, the swollen *Anuśāsana* separated from *Śānti* and recognised as a separate book, 200 to 400 A.D.; and finally 400 A.D. +: occasional amplifications."¹ The didactic chapters, though added very late, are not necessarily so late in origin. Probably they were composed by the second century B.C. That there was more than one version of the Epic tale is evident from one of the Buddhist *Jātakas* where the names of the Pāṇḍu brothers are given in a different order and the few incidents related are different from those in the great Sanskrit work.² But the theory of Holtzmann and von Schroeder that the poem was originally composed in honour of the Kurus and that it was later re-written to favour the Pāṇḍus is exploded. Nor does the hypothesis of Lassen, largely adopted by Weber, that the Epic originally related a war between Kurus and Pañcālas find support at present.

Though primarily a court epic to be recited before priests and aristocrats at great royal sacrifices, the *Mahābhārata* is also meant to be 'sung' to the people at large. According to tradition, it is connected with the White Yajurveda. It calls itself the fifth Veda and a Dharma Śāstra.³ But it is really an encyclopædia in which divergent and even contradictory ideas on religion, morals and politics are put in close juxtaposition. J. Dahlmann tried to prove that the *Mahābhārata* was originally composed as a law-book by a single author in the sixth or fifth century B.C., but his arguments are rather weak. In point of area, the Epic pertains to the western districts of the Madhyadeśa or middle country, where the principal theatre of events is situated. It is true that the later framework of epic brings in the kings

¹ Hopkins, *Great Epic of India*, pp. 397-98. Also pp. 398-402.

² *Kuṇḍala Jātaka*, V, 412-56. Cf. Darmestèrer, *Points de contact entre le Mahābhārata et le Śāh-nāmah*, *Journal Asiatique*, 1887.

³ *Ādi Parvan*, LXII.

of the whole of India, but it is unsafe to draw any conclusions about the rest of the country from material of such doubtful dates.¹

Unlike the Brāhmanas and Sūtras, the Epic pulsates with life and throughout displays freedom and independence. But from the circumstances of its composition, it cannot be held to represent the customs and opinions of any single generation. Since it is impossible to fix the chronological limits of its various sections, it can only be regarded as indicating that certain practices prevailed on the banks of the Jumná and the upper Ganges sometime before the Christian era. The Rājadharmānuśāsana chapters of the epic are invaluable as presenting a synthetic view of Hindu political thought but they seem to stray far from practice. Their precepts are honoured more in the breach than in the observance in the story of the Epic.

Throughout the Mahābhārata the social order is based on caste and a complete theory of it occurs in the Śānti Parvan.² There is, however, an arresting statement in the Vana Parvan where Yuddhiṣṭhira remarks that the intermixture of races had been very great indeed, that castes had been hopelessly mixed up and that, therefore, conduct was the chief thing

¹ On an analysis Pargiter (J.R.A.S., 1908, pp. 334 et seq.) concludes that "the division of the contending parties may be broadly said to be south Madhyadeśa and Pañcāla against the rest of India." See also C. V. Vaidya, *Epic India*. For some calculations of the date of the Mahābhārata events, rather wide of the mark, see V. Gopal Aiyar, *Chronology of Ancient India*; J. F. Hewitt, *History and Chronology of the Myth-making Age*; C. V. Vaidya, *Epic India, the Mahābhārata, a Criticism*. See also D. Von Hinloopen Labberton, J.R.A.S., 1913, pp. 1 et seq.

² See particularly Śānti Parvan, LVI, 28-29; LX, 7-16, 20-36; LXII, 4; LXIII, 1-5; LXV, 8-10; LXXII, 4-8; CLXXXVIII, 1-14 CCXCVII, 3-4.

that mattered.¹ Mésalliances were not uncommon in aristocratic circles and were not looked down. Vidura, born of a slave-girl, plays a part more honourable than that of his half-brothers, Dhṛitarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu. He is married, through the instrumentality of Bhīṣma, to a daughter of King Devaka by a Śūdra wife.² Non-Kṣatriya kingship was not altogether unknown. The Sabhā Parvan speaks of Śūdra kings on the western coast.³ Beyond the pale of caste lay some border peoples and foreigners like the Yavanas, Kirātas, Cīnas and Barbaras, who, according to the theory of the Śānti Parvan, were entitled to perform certain Vedic rites and make presents to Brāhmaṇas.⁴ The claims to Brahmanic supremacy are set forth in the Śānti Parvan in the most uncompromising fashion. In so many words the Brāhmaṇas are declared independent of the state.⁵ But in the epic as a whole it is the Kṣatriyas who are most prominent, whose will prevails and who are undoubtedly supreme. In the Śānti Parvan Kṣatriyas are exhorted by heaven and hell to work in constant co-operation and harmony with Brāhmaṇas.⁶ We are assured that on the Purohita depends the growth and preservation of the king himself.⁷ That every king had a Purohita is perfectly clear from the epic. There are also instances of Rīṣis like Nārada being worshipped by powerful rulers like the Pāṇḍus.⁸ But in the tale as a whole, the priests hardly exercise any influence on the course of events.

¹ Vana Parvan, CLXXX.

² Ādi Parvan, CXIV.

³ Sabhā Parvan, LI.

⁴ Śānti Parvan, LXV, 17-18.

⁵ Ibid., LXXII, 10-17; LXXIII, 29-32. Cf. Vana Parvan, CXXXIII. Also Śānti Parvan, XXXIII, 2-9; XXXIV, 1-4, 6-8; 22-27; XXXV, 1; LXXV, 10-12; LXXVI, 3-13; LXXVII, 2-7; LXXXIX, 3-6.

⁶ Śānti Parvan, LVI, 24-25; LXXIII, 8-13; LXXIV, 13-15, 17 LXXVII, 10-17; LXXXIII, 29.

⁷ Ibid., LXXIV, 1-2. Also Ādi Parvan, CLXXII.

⁸ Sabhā Parvan, V.

They are simply ignored when momentous decisions are taken.¹ In the Mahābhārata, the position of Śūdras is better than the Brahmanical legal texts would lead one to expect. The Śānti Parvan awards three of the chief offices of government to Śūdras.² In the Sabhā Parvan there are respectable Śūdras who are invited to the royal consecration.³

The political horizon of the Mahābhārata is far wider than that of any works noticed so far. It is in the epics that we first meet with a term—Bhārata
 Feudal elements in the State. or Bhāratavarṣa—which denoted the whole of India. The ideal of universal dominion is there. But in the composition of the state, feudal elements are present in a far greater measure and far more clearly than in the preceding epochs. There were many states, very small in size. It is significant that on a notable occasion Yudhiṣṭhira is ready to make peace if he be given just five villages to form a realm for himself. But every kingdom of any considerable size seems to have included a number of feudatories. The latter were called Rājans and, in contradistinction to them, the suzerain sometimes called himself Samrāt. A significant passage in the Sabhā Parvan has it that there were Rājans in every house but they had not attained to the rank of Samrāt, which title was difficult to obtain.⁴ It appears that Rājans themselves sometimes came forward for some reason or other to select an overlord. The Sabhā Parvan has it that Rājans selected Jarāsaṁdha to be their head because he was the

¹ See, for instance, Ādi Parvan, CII; Udyoga Parvan, I.

² Śānti Parvan, LXXV, 6—10.

³ Sabhā Parvan, XXIII, 41-42. See the Ādi Parvan, LXIV, for the legend that when Paraśu Rāma thrice bereft the earth of Kṣatriya men, the Kṣatriya race was continued by the union of Kṣatriya women with Brāhmanas. See the Ādi Parvan, CXXXIV, for Brāhmanas teaching the profession of arms to Kṣatriyas.

⁴ Sabhā Parvan, XV, 2.

most powerful of all. Several feudatories became his officers.¹ There was another manner in which the relationship of suzerain and vassal could arise. A monarch could instal a favourite as "king" of some region, have him duly consecrated and thus formally admit him into the charmed circle. It was understood that such a new "king" must be a person of the blood royal, a hero or a high military commander. To overcome Arjuna's reluctance to meet Karna in a tournament, Duryodhana creates the latter "king" of Anṅa. "At that very moment," we are told, "seated on a golden seat, with fried paddy and flowers and water-pots..... the mighty Karna was installed king by Brāhmaṇas versed in mantras. And the royal umbrella was held over his head, while camaras waved around that hero of graceful mien."² But when the untoward accident of his father's entrance revealed the 'fact' of Karna's descent from a Sūta, Bhīma exclaimed, "O thou, son of a charioteer! Thou dost not deserve death in fight at the hands of Pārtha (Arjuna) . . . And, O worst of mortals, thou art not worthy to sway the kingdom of Anṅa, even as a dog does not deserve the butter placed before the sacrificial fire." Duryodhana, however, reproved Bhīma and said, ". . . Might is the cardinal Virtue of a Kṣatriya, and even a Kṣatriya of inferior birth deserves to be fought with. The lineage of heroes, like the sources of lordly rivers, is ever unknown . . . This prince among men deserves the sovereignty of the world, not of Anṅa only, in consequence of the might of his arm and my disposition to obey him in everything." There arose a confused murmur approving of Duryodhana's speech.³

A third factor which promotes the feudal tendency in the Mahābhārata is the usual bid for supremacy symbolised

¹ Ibid., XIV.

² Ādi Parvan, CXXXVIII.

³ Ibid., CXXXIX.

by the Digvijaya. The Digvijayas or "conquests of the quarters," carried out by Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira do not result in any annexations. It was enough that their suzerainty was acknowledged by those whose dominions they or their lieutenants chose to enter. Again, on Pāṇḍu's Digvijaya, "the kings of the earth with joined hands waited on him with presents of various kinds of gems and wealth, precious stones and pearls and corals, and much gold and silver and first-class kine and handsome horses," etc., etc. Pāṇḍu accepted all the presents and retraced his steps towards his capital.¹ Thanks to these factors, a sort of feudalism seems to have become the order of the day. The Sabhâ Parvan brings on the stage a whole crowd of feudatories in whose presence Kṛiṣṇa slays his perverse relative, Śiṣupâla.² In the same Parvan, again many Râjans are seen bringing excellent jars for water for the bath of Yudhiṣṭhira after the great sacrifice.³ In a private conflict Karna and Duryodhana attack and slay many Râjans.⁴ In the many Svayamvaras in the Epic, the number of "kings" is legion.⁵ In the Aśvamedha Parvan, a prince salutes all his seniors of the Kuru race and the other 'kings' present.⁶

As a rule, the feudatories enjoyed autonomy in their internal affairs. But certain passages in the Mahâbhârata indicate that sometimes they chafed under the yoke, real or nominal. Not unoften were their relations with the suzerain characterised by distrust and jealousy.⁷ In the

¹ Âdi Parvan, CXII.

² Sabhâ Parvan, XLV.

³ Ibid., LIII.

⁴ Śânti Parvan, IV.

⁵ For instance, the svayamvara of Draupadi, Âdi Parvan, CLXXXVII; the svayamvara of Damayanti, Vana Parvan LV-LVII; again, Ibid., LXX-LXXI.

⁶ Aśvamedha Parvan, LXXXVII, 27.

⁷ Śânti Parvan, LXX, 30-31.

Sabhā Parvan Nārada suggests to Yudhiṣṭhira that conquest should be followed by earnest attempts at conciliation.¹ In the Aśvamedha Parvan a king depletes his treasury and then the feudatory princes swarm round him and cause him serious trouble.² On the other hand, it was sometimes felt that the suzerain power could not be all-sufficing and must allow feudatories to subsist. In the Āśramavāsi Parvan, Dhṛitarāṣṭra says that a powerful king should never seek to exterminate weak kings, for these do good to the world by cherishing the good and punishing the wicked.³

Round every suzerain and every feudatory chief there is an aristocracy of warriors. Strife is the law of their being throughout the Mahābhārata. They evince the highest loyalty to their chief and are always ready to lay down their lives for him. "Sweet it is to die in battle, the path to heaven lies in fighting."⁴ The Vana Parvan has it that glory is preferable to life and that a hero's real life is the life of his fame.⁵ That was the Kṣatriya way to be observed by royal and other aristocratic families. At the tragic conclusion of the domestic war, the blind old Dhṛitarāṣṭra says that he does not grieve for his hundred slaughtered sons. "They have all died in the observance of Kṣatriya duties."⁶ To Yudhiṣṭhira who, with his brothers, was responsible for the extermination of the old man's progeny, he had already remarked once, "Rise up . . . Do thou now attend to thy duties . . . Thou hast conquered this earth according to the usage of the Kṣatriyas."⁷ Instances of such expressions and deeds can be multiplied almost without number.

¹ Sabhā Parvan, V.

² Aśvamedha Parvan, V, 12.

³ Āśramavāsi Parvan, VI, 16.

⁴ Karna Parvan, CIV.

⁵ Vana Parvan, CCIII, 20, 31.

⁶ (Āśramavāsi) Parvan, III, 2 8.

⁷ Aśvamedha Parvan, I, 7.

It was under such circumstances that government was carried on during the period of which the traditions

are reflected in the *Mahābhārata*. The

The King.

administration was presided over by the

king who was expected personally to propel the machine. According to the theory of the epic, he was to be the embodiment of all virtues, all beneficence and heroism.¹ But the main story as well as the secondary episodes of the Epic show the average king falling far short of the ideal. The monarchs are addicted too much to gambling and hunting; often they are ferocious, at times licentious. In the *Sabhā Parvan* there is a debate on gambling which at last is approved.² The Kuru princes use fraud; Yudhiṣṭhira loses his all, including his wife who is wantonly insulted by the winners; Bhīma vows to drink the blood of Duryodhana—a vow which, later, he fulfils to his satisfaction.³ In the *Droṇa Parvan* Duryodhana wants Yudhiṣṭhira to be captured alive so as to entice him to dice and then exile and ruin him once again.⁴ Under the fascination of dice, Nala completely neglects the affairs of state. The people of the city and the officers came to the palace “unable to bear the calamity that had befallen their king conversant with

¹ For the ideal attributes and qualifications of the king, *Śānti Parvan*, LVII, 21-22, 30-36; *LXIX*, 3-4, *LXXX*, 2-113, *CXX*, 40-43. *Sabhā Parvan*, V. For theories of the origin of kingship *Vana Parvan*, CLXXXIII, *Śānti Parvan*, CLXCII, 7-23; *LIX*, 87-89; *LXVII*, 17-32. On the supreme imperative necessity of government, *Śānti Parvan* *LXVIII*, 8-35; *LXVII*, 2-4, 12-16, *LVII*, 40; *LXIV*, 2, 21-30; *LXXII*, 29; *LXXV*, 13; *LIX*, 133-34. On the inherent divine prestige and vigour of the king, *Śānti Parvan*, *LXXII*, 25; *LXVIII*, 39-47, *LXV*, 29; *LXVII*, 4, 8-11; *LXVIII*, 39-41, 48-50, 82-85; *XXXVIII*, 110.

For remarks on anxieties inseparable from royalty, *Ibid.*, *CLXXVI*, 10-12.

² *Sabhā Parvan*, *LVIII*.

³ *Ibid.*, *LXV* et seq.

⁴ *Droṇa Parvan*, *XII*.

virtue and welfare." But not even at his queen Damayanti's request would the king see them. "Those councillors of state as also the citizens, afflicted with grief and shame, returned to their homes, saying, 'He liveth not.'"¹ A little later, Damayanti herself called a council in the name of Nala. "When the subjects in a body had come a second time, the daughter of Bhīma informed Nala of it. But the king regarded her not."² In the Epic the Pāṇḍus are sometimes spoken of masters of the Vedas and the rest of the sacred lore, but as one traces their career step by step, one meets with no regular intellectual training on their part. On the other hand, they receive a regular military training. Arjuna's son Abhimanyu is a full-fledged warrior and is married at the age of sixteen.

The succession to the throne was hereditary and normally went by the rule of primogeniture. But a grave physical defect was generally tantamount to a disqualification. We are once told in the Udyoga Parvan that the gods do not approve of a defective king.³ In the Epic a new king has generally to be accepted by the people. The Mahābhārata embellishes the Bṛihaddevatā legend in which Devāpi declines the throne on the score of his skin disease. Pratīpa had three sons, Devāpi, Bālīka and Śāntanu. The eldest, a leper, loved by the whole family, is about to be installed, when "the priests, seniors, inhabitants of the city and the country forbid his consecration." The king yields.⁴ The blind Dhṛitarāṣṭra is passed over in favour of his younger brother Pāṇḍu. On the other hand, some exceptional reason might induce people to discount any physical defect. Once in the Vana Parvan they insist on having

¹ Vana Parvan, LIX.

² Ibid., LX.

³ Udyoga Parvan, CXLIX.

⁴ Ibid.

a blind man as their king.¹ On the death of Pându, the sceptre temporarily goes to Dhṛitarāṣṭra, but the question of regular succession comes to the fore when Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest son of Pându, reaches majority. The story of the epic favours the view that the crown belonged *de jure* to the family of Pându. The first move to instal Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhṛitarāṣṭra on the throne raised a wild popular uproar. Much earlier when Dhṛitarāṣṭra had first inquired if his newly-born son Duryodhana would be king, 'Jackals and other animals began to howl ominously.'² The minor episodes of the epic also point to hereditary succession and popular acceptance of the king. In the *Aśvamedha Parvan* the people dethrone a king but immediately proceed to invest his son Suvarcâ with the rights of sovereignty.³ In the myth of the early kings when the tyrant Veṇa is bereft of life by the Rîṣis, the sceptre is entrusted to his son Prîthu.⁴ In extraordinary contingencies the people practically elect a King. Thus, in the *Ādi Parvan* all the people chose Kuru, son of Samharaṇa to be their king, for, they said, "he is a virtuous man."⁵ Again, Janamejaya, though a mere boy, is elected king by the united voice of the people of the city. He ruled with the help of his priests and ministers.⁶ The practice of installing a prince as heir-apparent and even king during the lifetime of his father is in evidence. Thus, in the *Ādi Parvan*, Nahuṣa instals his son when he has secured the consent of the people of the city and the country.⁷ It is

¹ Vana Parvan, CCXCIX.

² Ādi Parvan, CXV.

³ Aśvamedha Parvan, V, 9.

⁴ Śānti Parvan, LIX, 87-89.

⁵ Ādi Parvan, XCIV, 49.

⁶ Ibid., XLIV, 6.

⁷ Ibid., LXXXV.

clear that in spite of the recognition of hereditary succession and primogeniture, a king has to be formally accepted by the people. Protest and tumult follow if there is anything radically wrong with the king-designate. In the epic, indeed, people appear on the stage on all extraordinary occasions. When Dhṛitarāṣṭra proposes to pass over his nephew Yudhiṣṭhira, the rightful heir, in favour of his own son, the people raise a fearful outcry. They meet in assemblies, streets and courtyards and demand that Dhṛitarāṣṭra should be deposed, that Yudhiṣṭhira should not only be declared heir-apparent but forthwith installed as King. Dhṛitarāṣṭra, they declared, had long ago forfeited the right to the kingdom on account of his blindness. How could he now have a right to transmit it to his son¹ Towards the close of the story, when old Dhṛitarāṣṭra leaves for forest-life, he addresses the whole multitude and commends the people to the care of Yudhiṣṭhira who speaks in his turn.² When resolved on renunciation, Yudhiṣṭhira arranged that his grand-nephew Parīkṣit should be king in Hastināpur. He called his subjects together and informed them of his plans. They were disconcerted at the news and unanimously disapproved of the king's intention to abdicate. "This should never be done." But Yudhiṣṭhira succeeded in persuading them to accept his proposals.³ (The king was expected to be accessible to all, even to agriculturists.⁴) On the other hand, the Epic, in some of its episodes, assumes that the king could do what he liked with his kingdom. At the game of dice which constitutes one of the central events in the plot of the Epic, Yudhiṣṭhira pawns and loses

¹ Ibid., CXLII.

² Āśramavāsi Parvan, IX. For moving scenes on this incident see section X.

³ Mahāprasthānika Parvan, I.

⁴ Sabhā Parān, V.

his city, his country, his lands, "the wealth of all dwelling therein except of Brâhmanas and all those persons themselves except Brâhmanas, still remaining to me."¹ Nala similarly loses his kingdom and his wealth to his brother Puṣkara who drives him away and proclaims throughout the city that any one showing any attention to Nala would be put to death. As a result none showed any regard to their erstwhile sovereign.²

The consecration of kings in the Mahâbhârata is conducted, on the whole, according to the procedure laid down in the Brâhmanas and Sûtras but a few additional touches are given. The king-designate 'worships' his ministers.³ Elsewhere he promises that by thought, word and deed he would protect the earth and religion and that he would observe the precepts of Ethics, Law and Politics in his conduct.⁴ To the consecration of Yudhiṣṭhira, Brâhmanas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and respectable Śâdras are invited.⁵

The subjects, headed by the priests, came to see him bringing with them diverse kinds of auspicious articles. They brought earth and gold, many kinds of gems, jars of gold, silver, copper and earth, full of water, flowers, fried paddy, kuśa grass, cow's milk, śami, pippala and palâśa, sacrificial fuel, honey, clarified butter, etc. Seated on a throne of gold, surrounded by Kṛiṣṇa, Dhṛitarâṣṭra, his brothers and others, Yudhiṣṭhira touched the beautiful white flowers, svastikas, vessels full of diverse articles, earth, gold, silver and gems. He and his wife Draupadî sat on the Sarvatobhadra seat, "covered with tiger-skin and blazing with effulgence." They poured on him oblations of

¹ Sabhâ Parvan, LXV.

² Vana Parvan, LXI.

³ Sabhâ Parvan, XIII, 4, 28, 29.

⁴ Śânti Parvan, LIX, 106-107.

⁵ Sabhâ Parvan, XXII, 41-42.

clarified butter with proper mantras. Kṛiṣṇa and others then poured on him water from sanctified conches. Yudhiṣṭhira who had accepted the presents offered to him now gave many more in return. The priests blessed him with all their heart.¹ Similar but less elaborate accounts of consecrations appear elsewhere in the Mahābhārata.² A consecration was often followed by a Digvijaya. Yudhiṣṭhira sends out armies to make sure of his suzerainty over the surrounding regions. The Aśvamedha Parvan seems to indicate that a successful Digvijaya was followed by a fresh consecration, a grand royal sacrifice, attended by many 'kings' and marked by an exchange of costly presents and by lavish gifts to priests and others.³ At the time of his own consecration, a king would sometimes consecrate his son or brother as Yuvarāja. Yudhiṣṭhira appointed his brother Bhīma, next to him in age, to that office.⁴ Besides the Yauvarājyābhiṣeka which is met with throughout Sanskrit literature, the Mahābhārata furnishes instances of the consecration of military commanders like Bhīṣma,⁵ Droṇa,⁶ Karṇa⁷ and others. Great, indeed, was the merit of sacrifices. At the conclusion of the war Kṛiṣṇa said to Yudhiṣṭhira, "Do thou now celebrate many a sacrifice with suitable presents to the priests."⁸ A little later, four sacrifices, the Rājastīya, Aśvamedha, Sarvamedha and Naramedha are recommended to Yudhiṣṭhira partly for purification from the sins of the war.⁹ Besides elaborate ritual and charity, there seems to have been an intellectual element about some sacrifices during the epic period. In

¹ Śānti Parvan, XLI, 1-23.

² Ādi Parvan, XLIV, LXXXV, Cf. Sabhā Parvan, XLV.

³ Aśvamedha Parvan, V, LXXII et seq.

⁴ Śānti Parvan, XLII, 7.

⁵ Udyoga Parvan, CLV.

⁶ Droṇa Parvan, V.

⁷ Karṇa Parvan, I.

⁸ Aśvamedha Parvan, II.

⁹ Ibid., III, 1-8.

the Vana Parvan, for instance, Aṣṭāvakra proposes to his uncle Śvetaketu that they should repair to Janaka's sacrifice to listen to the discussions of Brāhmanas as well as to partake of excellent food.¹

Ushered with pomp and ceremony into his office, the king lived in a grand style. His palace was expected to be a knot of paradise. In the Sabhā

The Palace
and Capital.

Parvan, at the request of Kṛiṣṇa, Maya undertakes to build for the Pāṇḍus a palace like that of the celestials.² When finished, the mansion was all splendour and grandeur.³ Close to the royal residence was a court of justice, gambling hall, a music hall, an arena for wrestling and brute fights. A spacious area was set aside for markets at the capital. Parks were laid out for the people. Definite quarters were assigned to the common people. The "king's city" should be laid out in six squares, the streets should be well-watered and well-lighted with lamps. Pains should be taken to make it as sanitary and beautiful as possible. A

capital city in the Mahābhārata is defended by battlemented towers and seven moats.⁴

Habitations. Besides the capital there are other towns, multitudes of villages and yet smaller settlements called ghoṣas or pallis in the Mahābhārata.

At the capital, the king was assisted in the task of ad-

The Adminis- ministration by a number of officers of
tration. whom seven were the most important,

viz., the commander of forces, the second in command, the governor of the citadel, the chief

Chief officers. priest, the judge, the physician and

¹ Vana Parvan, CXXXII.

² Sabhā Parvan, I.

³ Ibid., III-IV. Several descriptions of great Sabhās, which are here tantamount to palaces and courts, occur in this Parvan: the Celestial Sabhā (VII); the Sabhā of Yama (VIII); the Sabhā of Varuṇa (IX); the Sabhā of Vaiśravaṇa (X); the Sabhā of Brahman (XI).

⁴ Vana Parvan, CLXXXIV. Virāṭa Parvan, XXII.

astrologer.¹ Subsequently there is mention of eighteen principal officers, including the heir-apparent, chamberlain, overseers of the harem, inspectors of prisons, justice, forests and frontiers.² The theory of the Śānti Parvan speaks of more than thirty chief offices.³ In another section of the same Parvan, a king is advised to appoint officers for mines, salt, Śulka (customs), river-crossings, elephants, infantry, etc.⁴ One of the most important of all offices was that of the ambassador. It might be entrusted to any of the chief personages at the court. Drupada entrusts it once to his Purohita.⁵ Kṛiṣṇa himself acted as the envoy of the Pāṇḍus. Dhṛitarāṣṭra once entrusted a diplomatic mission to his younger brother,⁶ and on another occasion to his charioteer.⁷ The charioteer was another great personage. Kṛiṣṇa himself acted as the charioteer of Arjuna in the great war. Over all the officers and ministers stood a chief minister. "A king without a minister cannot govern his kingdom even for three days."⁸ Some of the chief officers were relations of the king. After his consecration Yudhiṣṭhira bestows many offices on his relations.⁹

Recruitment of
officers.

Elsewhere, too, the Śānti Parvan counsels that relations of the king or persons particularly trustworthy should be appointed to chief offices.¹⁰ In another section of the same Parvan, again, birth is prescribed as one of the considerations in making appointments.¹¹ There it is declared that to the chief offices as a

¹ Sabhā Parvan, V, 38.

² Ibid., V.

³ Śānti Parvan, LXXV, 16-10.

⁴ Ibid., LXIX.

⁵ Udyoga Parvan, VI.

⁶ Sabhā Parvan, LVIII.

⁷ Udyoga Parvan, XXII.

⁸ Śānti Parvan, CVI, 11. Sabhā Parvan, V.

⁹ Śānti Parvan, XLII, 8-19.

¹⁰ Ibid., LXIX.

¹¹ Ibid., CVI, 12.

whole should be appointed four Brâhmaṇas, three Kṣatriyas, twenty-one Vaiśyas, three Śûdras and one Sûta.¹ In the practice of the Mahâbhârata, however, the principal officers are drawn from the aristocracy. It is possible that some of the offices were hereditary.²

In the Sabhâ Parvan Nârada hints the advice that a king should constantly consult his ministers.³ In practice, however, the rule was not always observed.

Position of
ministers. Nor was the advice of ministers, when

tendered, always followed. In the Bhîṣma Parvan, Dhṛitarâṣṭra is blamed for refusing to listen to Vidura, Bhîṣma, Droṇa and Saṁjaya. Saṁjaya himself blames Dhṛitarâṣṭra for the evil policy he had pursued.⁴ When leaving the capital the king might entrust his affairs to the Purohita or some other dignitary. In the Âśramavâsi Parvan, when Yudhiṣṭhira goes out with his brothers, the city is left in the charge of the Purohita and Yuyutsu, a general.⁵ When for some extraordinary reason the king was unable or unwilling to perform his duties, the charge of the state might devolve on the queen and ministers. In the episode of Nala, the king forgets all in the fascination of dice. His queen Damayanti meets a deputation of citizens and herself summons a council, though she fails to rouse her husband from his stupor to attend it. Apprehensive of the worst, she asks Vârṣṇeya, the royal charioteer, to take her children to her parents in Kuṇḍina. Before obeying her command, Vârṣṇeya seeks and obtains the approval of the chief officers.⁶ In the Mahâbhârata there is no fixed rule about regency during a minority. In one such contingency Bhîṣma alone guards the realm.⁷

¹ Śânti Parvan, CVI, 11.

² For the ideal qualifications of ministers, *Ibid.*, LXXXIII, 2-50; CXIX, 3-9; CXX, 45.

³ Sabhâ Parvan, V.

⁴ Bhîṣma Parvan, LXV.

⁵ Âśramavâsi Parvan, XV, XXIII.

⁶ Vana Parvan, LX. ⁷ Âdi Parvan, CII.

In the Epics, the old popular assembly has altogether disappeared. If the people occasionally make themselves

The Court. felt, it is not through any constitutional channels. In place of the assembly there

has grown up a court consisting of the king's relations, nobles, feudatories, priests, officers and chief men of the capital. In the Mahābhārata the court is often the scene of festivity and rejoicing. Dancing girls form part of the retinue.

In the sphere of local government, the village is the unit. Every village seems to have had an officer, called Grāmādhipati, who looked after affairs in general and was particularly concerned with the king's share of the produce.

Local Govern-
ment.

In Vedic literature, the office of Grāmāṇi is the goal of a Vaiśya's ambition.¹ The Mahābhārata furnishes no indication of the caste of the Grāmādhipati. In the Sabhā Parvan Nārada counsels the appointment of five officers in each village,² but that may be a counsel of perfection. We cannot be certain that even the Grāmādhipati was regularly appointed by the government. He might sometimes have been hereditary or marked out by village opinion for the office. According to the theory of the Śānti Parvan, groups of ten, hundred and a thousand villages should form the successive administrative divisions. Here theory may be reflecting facts in a rather idealised manner. Each head of a village or an administrative division should keep his immediate superior informed of all happenings and submit regular reports. The officers seem to have been paid in kind. For instance, the superintendent of a hundred villages should receive a large village for his sustenance while the officer of a thousand villages should enjoy the revenues of a small town as his

¹ Taittiriya Saṁhitā, II, 5, 4, 4. Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā, I, 6, 5.

² Sabhā Parvan, V.

remuneration. Such a practice would inevitably promote the feudal tendencies. From this scheme of local government towns seem to have been excluded. Each town is to have an officer to itself, a Sarvârthacintaka, one who thought or cared for everything.¹ For purposes of defence garrisons were to be stationed along the borders and in towns.²

To watch over government servants, feudatories, nobles and the people at large, a host of spies swarmed the land. Bhîṣma declares that the

Spies.

employment and direction of spies is one of the prime duties of the king. They are to be set in cities, provinces and the territories of feudatories. None is to escape their glance, not even the king's sons, relations, friends or counsellors. No place is to be free from their ubiquitous presence. They must frequent parks and pleasure-grounds, courts, houses, shops, meetings of scholars and crowds of common people.³ One of the functions which fell to the lot of spies in ancient India was that which falls to the lot of journalists at present. They had to submit to the sovereign regular reports on public feeling on the doings of the government in the cities and provinces.

Besides those directly concerned with administrative business, there were large numbers of other persons in the

Artisans.

employment of the state. There seem to have been state factories in which multitudes of artisans worked. In the Sabhâ Parvan, Nârada advises Yudhiṣṭhira to keep them regularly supplied with materials, to pay them regularly, to examine their work and to reward their merit.⁴

¹ Śânti Parvan, CXXXVII, 3-11.

² Ibid., LXIX, 6 et seq.

³ Ibid., LXIX, 8-12, 52; LXXXIX, 14-16; LXXXVI, 20-21; XCI, 50.

⁴ Sabhâ Parvan, V.

The sources of revenue in the Mahābhārata are wider than in the Sūtras. Theory again fixes the land-tax at one-sixth of the produce. This was supplemented by customs again on the theory

Revenue.

that merchants should pay for the protection which they received from the state. There was no fixed rate for mercantile dues; they were to be settled after consideration of the purchases, sales, profits and standard of living. Artisans should be taxed on an evaluation of their manufactures, their expenses, receipts and their general prosperity. Justice formed another plentiful source and brought in a good deal by way of fines and forfeitures. In a curious passage, Arjuna remarks that Brāhmaṇas should be punished with word of mouth, Kṣatriyas with restriction to bare sustenance and Vaiśyas with fines and forfeiture of property.

According to orthodox theory Brāhmaṇas are exempt from all taxes. They were expected to live a life of poverty and could not therefore have much to pay. But the Śānti Parvan makes it clear that if they forsook their true vocation and followed any other occupations, they were to be taxed like others. If any group of persons combined to resist taxation, they should be struck down by diplomacy or force. The brunt of taxation fell on the Vaiśyas who are called karapradāḥ or payers of taxes in the Sabhā Parvan. * In the same Parvan we read of 'love-offerings.' Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Sūdras, outcasts, high and low alike

* Śānti Parvan, LXIX, 25; LXI, 10-11, 13-16, 20-23; LXXXVII, 14-15, 18-21, 23, 35-40; LXXXVIII, 2-12; LXXXIX, 24; XV, 4; OXIX, 17; CXX, 43-44; CXXX, 9, 35; CXXXIII, 3; CXXXIV, 3-4; CXXXVI, 1-2; LXXXVI, 3-11.

* Sabhā Parvan, XLVI. Cf. Ādi Parvan, CXIII.

bring tribute to the king, for the sake of love (prityartham).¹ Euphemisms apart, such offerings constituted a regular source of income. Elsewhere in the same Parvan many semi-civilised tribes, like the Vairamas, Pâradas, Tuṅgās, Kitavas, living in woodlands or on the sea-shore, present numerous animals of various species to the king.² The forests which abounded yielded their products and were a distinct source of income. Forced labour was sometimes exacted. We are told in the Śānti Parvan that all Brāhmaṇas who did not come up to the ideal should be made to pay taxes and render the usual corvée.³

The Mahābhārata makes it clear that in emergencies like war, the king made unusual demands on his subjects.

Emergency
Finance.

Abnormal times were regarded as governed by a morality of their own. A king should explain the situation to his people and levy extra taxes. He might force any unwilling subjects to disgorge their wealth. If war exhausted the treasury, he might seize the wealth of all except Brāhmaṇas.⁴ It is recognised that to defray the expenses of a sacrifice, a king may seize the wealth of an irreligious rich man.⁵ At the conclusion of the war, Yudhiṣṭhira declares that he could not levy dues for celebrating a sacrifice at the moment.⁶ He plainly implies that that was the usual practice. A Dasyu's wealth could also be confiscated in case of need.⁷

¹ Sabhā Parvan, LII.

² Ibid., LI.

³ Śānti Parvan, LXXVI.

⁴ Śānti Parvan, LXXI, 23; OXXX, 37-38, 47-48; OXXXII, 5, 9; OXXXIII, 3.

⁵ Aśvamedha Parvan, XII.

⁶ Ibid., III, 14.

⁷ Śānti Parvan, OXXXVI.

It is difficult to obtain any clear idea of the sphere of state-activity during the Epic period. The theory of the

Śānti Parvan makes it coterminous with life itself. The state should ceaselessly foster righteousness, guide, correct and

control the moral life of the people, make the earth habitable and comfortable for men.¹ It is possible that the theorist had some basis of practice for his counsel when he wanted the government to reclaim land for cultivation, to excavate tanks and lakes and thus make agriculture independent of the caprices of the rains, to make loans of seed-grain to cultivators in time of need.² The king should cause wide roads to be laid out and watering-stations to be erected at proper distances.³ Robbers should be exterminated everywhere.⁴ The king is himself counselled to practise boundless charity on occasions like the Rājastūya but he must discourage and punish indiscriminate begging.⁵

In the Mahābhārata the aspiration to create an empire is hallowed into an imperative, sacred duty. Yudhiṣṭhira, the epic embodiment of kingly righteousness, burns to emulate the glory of the kings of old.⁶ He must establish a glorious empire and, therefore, make short work of the mighty Jarāsandha of Magadha.⁷ Where unprovoked aggression was erected into a moral ideal, it was inevitable that diplomacy should throw all scruples overboard. Reason of state became the one guiding, overmastering principle and justified the extreme of fraud and treachery.

¹ Śānti Parvan, LXXXVIII, 14; LXXV, 19; LIX, 114-15.

² Ibid., V, 17, 21; LXV, 2. Sabhā Parvan, V.

³ Śānti Parvan, LXIX, 53.

⁴ Ibid., LXXV, 5.

⁵ Ibid., LXXV, 10; XIII, 40-41; LXXXVIII, 16-17; 23-24. For royal gifts see *inter alia* the description of Hariścandra's great sacrifice, Sabhā Parvan, XII.

⁶ Sabhā Parvan, XIII.

⁷ Ibid., XIV. For Jarāsandha and his ancestor Vṛiadratha, Ibid., XVII.

In the course of one of the most remarkable episodes in the epic Jarāsandha declares that it was a Kṣatirya's duty to bring others under his sway by the display of his prowess and that he was justified in treating them as slaves.¹ He longs to make a hecatomb of a hundred 'kings' and had already collected eighty-six for the purpose when he was overpowered by Kṛiṣṇa and the Pāṇḍus.² In the Vana Parvan it is stated that whatever sin a king commits in acquiring dominion, is expiated afterwards by means of sacrifices and gifts.³ While on this subject in the Śānti Parvan, Bhiṣma, the great exponent of righteousness, takes his stand on pure reason. He quotes Uśanas who, in days of yore, had told the Daityas that scriptures were no scriptures if they could not stand the test of reason. Under the pressure of abnormal circumstances, extraordinary maxims must be applied to the conduct of affairs—maxims which had brought 'blazing prosperity' to king Śatruñjaya to whom they were preached by an ancient sage. One should readily surrender before might and then seize the first opportunity to smash the powerful antagonist or suzerain. A king should remember that vanquished foes are always on the alert and can never be trusted. Secret diplomacy, hypocrisy of all sorts, "divide and rule," corruption of the enemy's forces or subjects, lavish use of gold and poison, ruthless severity, devastation of hostile territory, wholesale destruction of its population—such are the weapons recommended for dealing with enemies.⁴ The whole series of chapters on Āpaddharma in the Śānti Parvan⁵ remind one of Machiavelli. There are sentences, written with the "point

¹ Sabhā Parvan XXXII.

² Ibid., XV.

³ Vana Parvan, XXV. See also XXII. XXXIII.

⁴ Śānti Parvan CIII, 16, 19-42; OV, 6-9, 21-25; CXXXI, 4-7, 10-12; CXXXVIII, 12-18; CXLI, 7-70. CXLI, 70-71, CXLIII, 1-24. For Arjuna's remarks to the same purpose, XV, 16-23, 25, 37-38; also X, 6-8; Sabhā Parvan XXXII. Of Vana Parvan XXIX-XXXIV; For Kāṇikas discourse in the same strain, Ādi Parvan, CXLIII.

⁵ Āpaddharma begins with section CXXXI of the Śānti Parvan.

of a stiletto" which may pass for quotations from "the Prince." The section, as a whole, may be styled, as Diderot proposed to style certain chapters of Machiavelli, as "the circumstances under which it is right for a prince to be a scoundrel." Like the Italian realist, the Epic poet "strips away the flowing garments of convention and common-place; closes his will against sympathy and feeling; ignores pity as an irrelevance, just as the operating surgeon does." In both, the purpose is the same, "the secular state supreme, self-interest and self-regard, avowed as the single principle of state action; material force, the master-key to civil policy. Clear intelligence backed by unsparing will, unflinching energy, remorseless vigour, the brain to plan and the hand to strike—here is the salvation of states."¹ The political circumstances which primarily suggested these lines of thought were, in essentials, the same in medieval Italy as in Ancient India. In the *Āśramavāsi Parvan*, towards the close of the *Mahābhārata*, Dhṛitarāṣṭra enunciates to Yudhiṣṭhira the doctrine of Maṇḍala as the guiding principle of policy,² but these passages are very late.

In contrast to its precepts on diplomacy, the *Mahābhārata* inculcates a high standard of the Ethics of the Battlefield. A Kṣatriya may oppose deceit by

Ethics of the
battlefield.

deceit but should always be fair in response to fairness. He should not proceed on horseback against a car-warrior and should not wear armour when pitted against one unclad in mail. He should not strike one who has been disabled, who has fallen into distress, whose bowstring has been cut or who has lost his vehicle. A wounded enemy should be sent home or properly treated by skilful surgeons. If a wounded righteous warrior is taken captive, he should be

¹ Morley, *Romanes Lecture on Machiavelli*, pp. 20-21, 26-27, 33.

² *Āśramavāsi Parvan*, VI, VII.

cured and then set at liberty. "This is the eternal duty." A warrior whose armour has fallen off, who begs for quarter, saying, 'I am thine,' who joins his hands in supplication or who has laid his weapon aside, may be taken captive but should not be killed. Nor should one slay those who are asleep, thirsty, fatigued, or at meals, nor those who are seeking spiritual emancipation, who are mad or who stay trustfully. The lives of camp-followers, menial servants and other people of the sort are sacrosanct. An ambassador is not to be injured under any circumstances. A maiden, captured in war, should be detained for a year and asked to marry the victor. If she does not consent, she ought to be sent back. So, too, with slaves. In the story, this ideal is approached by many in varying degrees. But not seldom do warriors cry fie on it. In the fierce conflicts of Droṇa Parvan for instance, heroes openly throw all ideals overboard.

Besides promising heavenly joys to valour, the Mahābhārata counsels a king to reward meritorious military service by double pay, excellent food and drink, promotion in the ranks and a seat equal to that of the king. The Epic lays down physical, mental and moral qualifications for soldiers, dilates on the time, season and order of manoeuvres and discusses the characteristics, dispositions and chances of success of armies.¹ But the subject lies beyond the scope of the present work.

¹ Śānti Parvan, LXIX, 34-40, 55; LXXXV, 26-28; LXXXVI, 5-15; XCIV, 1-2; XCV, 2-5, 7-14; XCVI, 1-7, 11, 16-17, 22-23; XCVII, 8, 11-12; XCVIII, 15-25, 35-48, XCIX, 1-17; C, 6-24, 30; CI, 324-5; CII, Bhīṣma Parvan, I, 24-27 et seq. For the fighting, also Droṇa Parvan, Karṇa Parvan, Hopkins, J. A. O. S., XIII, pp. 191-325, treats the subject of war in the Mahābhārata exhaustively.

The kingship, tinged with feudalism, is the predominant type of government in the Mahābhārata. But there are a few passages which point to the existence of Gaṇas or oligarchies. Yudhiṣṭhira inquires of Bhīṣma how gaṇas prosper, how they can manage to keep secrets with so many in the seat of government. In reply Bhīṣma emphasises that Gaṇas must, above all, maintain internal cohesion. If disunited, they will fall an easy prey to enemies. If united, they will attain to prosperity and outsiders will seek their alliance. It behoves their wise elders to nip in the bud any disputes that may arise within the Gaṇas. If the seniors treat rising dissensions with indifference, the members will soon fall into violent mutual wrangling. It is essential to guard against dangers from within. They can uproot a Gaṇa in a single day. Gaṇas are destroyed not by the courage, diplomacy or gold of the enemy nor by the lure of female charms, but by internal dissensions. Harmony is the very law of their being. In every Gaṇa people should be taught to practise their duties, to bow before learned persons. The Executive, consisting of the 'chief persons,' must be trusted and suffered to keep secrets. The Gaṇas should keep their treasuries full, should regulate their policy well, employ numbers of spies and display courage, perseverance and steady prowess on the battlefield.¹ It appears that the oligarchies, non-monarchical, flourished for a while but they were torn by internal dissensions. They had an executive which sometimes found it difficult to make its authority felt. About the Andhakavṛiṣṇi oligarchy Kṛiṣṇa

¹ Śānti Parvan, CVII, 10--32. F. W. Thomas (J. R. A. S., 1914, pp. 10--12) shows that Gaṇa implied absence of royalty, though Fleet (J. R. A. S., 1915, pp. 13--19) interprets Gaṇa as a tribe. With a monarchical background, however, the passages in question make little sense.

remarks that though he was entitled to one-half of the executive power, he only received bitter words from his relations.¹

Besides the state, feudal dominion and regular local government, there appears in the Mahābhārata another principle of organisation. Guilds of

Guilds. warriors, industrial workers and traders flit across the stage. They are reckoned

among the principal supports of the monarchy. A king is enjoined to avail himself of Śreṇivāla which is described as equal to that of hired soldiers. It refers most probably to force which guilds of warriors could supply, obviously for a consideration. Economic guilds depend for their vitality on internal cohesion. Nothing can expiate the sin of forsaking one's duty towards one's guild.²

To the Mahābhārata was appended another work called the Harivaṃśa which describes the exploits of Kṛiṣṇa and his ancestors in 16,000 śloka grouped in

The Harivaṃśa. three sections. It is rather late. Nor does it throw any fresh light on political institutions. Cantos 146-7 describe a magnificent royal picnic in which the heroes, Baladeva, Kṛiṣṇa, and others spend the day in feasting, drinking, singing and dancing. Thousands of courtesans enlivened the scene.

III.—THE RĀMĀYANA.

Along with the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana of Vālmiki ranks as one of the two great Epics of India. It

The date of the Rāmāyana. has a unity and individuality which the longer compendium lacks. But its date is almost equally uncertain. In its present form it is certainly later than the kernel of the

¹ Śānti Parvan, LXXXI.

² Vana Parvan, CCXLVIII, 16. Śānti Parvan, LIV, 20.

Mahābhārata. Jacobi shows that the Rāmāyaṇa originally consisted of five books, II—VI, though here, too, some cantos are interpolated. The Seventh Book is certainly so late that it cannot be utilised along with the rest. The first beginnings of the real epic may go back to 500 B.C. but extensive additions were made till the second century B.C., and even later. However, the second century B.C. saw most of the work complete. The Rāmāyaṇa arose in Kośala, with its centre at Ayodhyā in Avadhā (Oudh). Its narrative leads much further towards the south, though Laṅkā, the abode of Rāvaṇa, the king of Rākṣasas, is hardly likely to be Ceylon.¹ Whatever the locale of Kiśkindhā or of Laṅkā, the Rāmāyaṇa, for the most part, illustrates the political conditions only of the eastern districts of Madhyadeśa just as the Mahābhārata pertains to its western parts. Unlike the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa is a Kāvya; it is called the Ādi-Kāvya, the first 'artificial' poem. Its style is certainly polished and graceful, but it has all the naturalness and spontaneity of true poetry.² It was meant to be recited before gatherings. The fourth section of the First Book, the Bālakāṇḍa, says that after composing the Rāmāyaṇa the master reflected as to how he should publish it before assemblies. The Buddhist Jātakas make it clear that there were several versions of the Rāmāyaṇa current. In the Daśaratha Jātaka, Sitā is the sister of Rāma paṇḍita and Lakkhaṇa

¹ Jacobi located Laṅkā in Assam. Sardar Kibe has recently located it in the Central Provinces.

² Jacobi, *Das Rāmāyaṇa*. Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 302—11. Griffith, Appendix to his *Abridged Translation of the Rāmāyaṇa*. Keith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1915, pp. 218—28. The statements of Dischrysontionius (50—117 A.D.), and Philostratus (170 or 180 A.D.), that Homer's poetry was sung in India (Eggeling, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 21, 9th edition, p. 281) can refer only to the Rāmāyaṇa and not to the Mahābhārata as was once supposed. The Rāmāyaṇa consists of 24,000 Ślokas and has come down in three distinct recensions, (1) the Bengal, (2) the Bombay and (3) the West Indian.

paṇḍita as the two princes are called and the other details of the story are also different.¹

In spite of the difference in locale, the chronological approximation makes the social and political atmosphere

of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa much the same. Caste is present in either, but it must be added that priestly

Brahmanic influence.

influence is stronger in the Rāmāyaṇa. For instance, at the conclusion of the horse-sacrifice for the birth of a son, king Daśaratha conferred the earth upon Brāhmaṇas. The latter, however, knew their resources and interests better and said, "Thou alone art worthy to protect the earth; nor can we rule it being constantly engaged in Vedic studies. Do thou, therefore, confer on us something instead, as the price thereof. Do thou confer upon us gems or gold, or kine, or anything else, for . . . we do not want earth." Daśaratha then bestowed on them ten lacs of kine, ten koṭis of gold and twenty of silver.² Later, the king calls Viśvāmitra his guide and his god, when the latter comes to request him to depute two of his sons, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, to fight the demons who molested his sacrifices. The king is unwilling to part with his tender children for the sake of a hazardous enterprise. Viśvāmitra gets angry with the king and the earth trembles. Vaśiṣṭha, the Purohita of Daśaratha, advises compliance with Viśvāmitra's demand. The king yields.³ In the course of a dialogue later on, the power of the Brāhmaṇas is affirmed to be greater than that of Kṣatriyas.⁴ Describing the ideal kingdom of Ayodhyā, the poet specially notes that the Brāhmaṇas were obeyed by Kṣatriyas, who, in their

¹ Daśaratha Jātaka, IV, 124-31.

² Bālakāṇḍa, Section XV. The later Uttarakāṇḍa, Ch. 74, has a peculiar theory of the development of caste.

³ Bālakāṇḍa, XX.

⁴ Ibid., LIV. See also VII.

turn, were followed by Vaiśyas, while the Śūdras occupied with their proper vocations, ministered unto the three higher orders.¹

The Rāmāyaṇa reflects the same type of feudalism as the Mahābhārata. Daśaratha who is often designated King of Ayodhyā is quite as often called a universal ruler.² It appears that while he actually governed only the region of Kośala with its capital at Ayodhyā³ he exercised a sort of suzerainty over a wider area which was parcelled out among a number of feudatories. Daśaratha's court is described as ordinarily crowded with neighbouring kings who come to pay tribute.⁴ For Daśaratha's horse-sacrifice, they pour into the city of Ayodhyā daily and nightly in a long stream and bring with them various kinds of gems for presentation to the king.⁵ Elsewhere there is mention of "princes throned as well as those without thrones," that is, ruling feudatories as well as other members of their families, "from east and west, north and south," bringing countless gems for presentation to Bharata.⁶ In a remarkable episode, there is an assertion of the suzerain's right to call feudatories to order and to take them to task for misconduct. When the Vānara king Vālin reproves Rāma for hitting him secretly instead of fighting him openly as behoved a Kṣatriya, Rāma replies that Kiṣkindhā was part of Ikṣvāku dominions, that

¹ Bālakāṇḍa, VI.

The Uttarakāṇḍa, which is later than the rest of the Rāmāyaṇa, records an episode which found an echo in subsequent Sanskrit literature. Śūdras were forbidden to practise religious austerities, lest the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas should be enfeebled. A Śūdra who dared to transgress the prohibition was killed by Rāma with his own hand. (Uttarakāṇḍa, LXXXVII-XCI.)

² Bālakāṇḍa, VII, for instance.

³ Ibid., VI.

⁴ Ibid., V.

⁵ Ibid., XIII.

⁶ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, LXXXII.

the Ikṣvākus had the power of awarding favour or punishment on men, beasts and birds alike, and that, as commanded by Bharata who then ruled the capital Ayodhyā, he was entitled to determine how he would punish those who went astray. Śāstras had sanctioned the destruction of miscreants.¹ In the Rāmāyaṇa however, Kośala, the real kingdom of the Ikṣvākus, is rather small. On his banishment, Rāma had quickly passed its bounds.² Marriage alliances are of frequent occurrence among suzerains and feudatories alike.

The Rāmāyaṇa knows only of the monarchical form of government and recognises the succession not only as hereditary but as governed by the law of primogeniture. The heir-apparent was installed Yuvarāja and associated in the task of administration during the lifetime of his father. The yuvarāja as well as the king is formally accepted by the people who protest if any violation of the recognised custom is attempted. At the approach of age, Daśaratha desires to retire into the forest and entrust the kingdom to Rāma.³ He summons a huge assembly of people from the capital and the provinces, lays his proposal before them and requests them to speak out their minds. They heartily approve of the project of Rāma's installation and paint his transcendent virtues on which their judgment was based. *Inter alia* Rāma had mastered the use of all the weapons known among men, gods and Asuras. Returning from the field on horse-back or on an elephant, he had always enquired after the welfare of the people, after their sons and wives, their disciples and servants, their fire and home and all else. So he must be king.⁴ Not long after when people

¹ Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa, XVIII.

² Ayodhyākāṇḍa, XLIX. Yet in the next Canto L, it is called the extensive and romantic Kośala.

³ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, I.

⁴ Ibid., II.

notice Râma on his way to his father's palace, they exhort him to protect them after the manner of Daśaratha.¹ When Daśaratha, bound by his previous promises to one of his wives, Kaikeyi, is led to exile Râma for fourteen years and to command Bharata's installation in his place, there is general consternation at the departure from the established law. Lakṣmaṇa advises Râma to take instantaneous possession of the government, threatens dire civil war and talks of depopulating Ayodhyâ with sharp arrows and of despatching his father in case of opposition. Râma's mother Kauśalyâ, though devoted to her husband, seriously requests her son to consider Lakṣmaṇa's proposals.² When Râma meekly accepts exile, Lakṣmaṇa is beside with rage. "People will mark this thy forsaking of the kingdom for redeeming the vows of thy father with opprobrium." "Do thou perform the rites of installation with things necessary for benediction—do thou engage in these affairs—myself alone shall be able by force to thwart the opposition of the kings."³ Râma, however, explains that Daśaratha was the lord and master of all people and might do what he liked.⁴ This, however, was not the view of the minister Sumantra when he reproved Kaikeyi saying, "... the princes will obtain the kingdom one after another according to age;—this custom it is your study to render nugatory even while the lord of the Ikṣvâku race is still alive. . . . No Brâhmaṇa will dwell in your dominion."⁵ When Râma has departed for the forest and the ministers, assembled, request Bharata to "become our king," the latter replies, "... In our line it is ever fit for the first-born alone to perform the task of government . . ." He must bring Râma back.⁶ Later when a huge assembly

¹ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, XVII.

² Ibid., XXI.

³ Ibid., XXIII.

⁴ Ibid., XXIV.

⁵ Ibid., XXXV.

⁶ Ibid., LXXIX.

again presses the crown on him he reiterates that "First-born, foremost in merit, righteous-souled . . . Râma deserved the kingdom as Daśaratha did." If he, a younger prince, accepted the offer, he would bring disgrace on the race of Ikṣvâku.¹ On meeting Râma at long last in the forest, Bharata says, "Thou art the first-born; and meet it is that thou shouldst get thyself installed. Râma answers that "the monarch is competent to make me stay in the woods clad in black deer skin, as to establish me in the monarchy."² To this view of the case Bharata's reply is significant. "Deprived of the kingdom in consequence of my posteriority in point of birth, what doth regard for morality avail me? . . . even this morality has been established with reference to us, *viz.*, that the eldest son of the king existing, a younger one cannot be the king."³ Elsewhere, too, in the Rāmāyaṇa the same rule is established. In the Bālakāṇḍa, on the death of Sagara the people make his son Aunsuman king. It will be observed that in such transactions popular opinion and feeling counted for something. Nevertheless it could sometimes be disregarded. In the episode of Râma's proposed installation it is to be noted that the people's will, which Daśaratha had so sedulously endeavoured to ascertain and which still favoured Râma's installation, eventually goes unheeded. Sometimes, of course, a popular agitation could redress some grievous wrong. A legend in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa recalls how a king had been compelled, by the pressure of the people, to banish his son who amused himself by throwing people into the river Sarayū.⁴

¹ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, LXXXII.

² Ibid., OL.

³ Ibid., CH.

⁴ Ibid., XXXVI.

In the ordinary course of things, it will appear, the consecration of a new king was attended by festivity on a gigantic scale. The whole city was decorated. Courtezans played and danced all around. Priests, generals, merchants, citizens, provincials—all thronged the palace and made a holiday.¹ The white umbrella was one of the signs of kingship. Sitâ, before she knew of the abandonment of the proposed installation of her husband, innocently inquires, . . . "Why has not thy charming face been placed under the shade of an umbrella, having hundred ribs and white as a watery foam?"² Later, the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa and Yuddhakāṇḍa describe actual consecrations more or less in the Mahābhārata style. The Uttarakāṇḍa which is later than the rest of the Rāmāyaṇa, has two descriptions in the same strain. In every one of them, auspicious waters are collected from the seas and rivers in golden jars. They are sprinkled over the prince seated on a throne. The crown is placed on his head. Generally he receives presents from his nobles and subjects and offers gifts to Brāhmaṇas. Generally, too, a sacrifice is performed.³

Thus installed on the throne, the king was expected to be the embodiment of all virtues.⁴ As in the Mahābhārata, he should run the governmental machine himself. He is the chief executive officer, the chief judge, the chief military commander. None the less he lives a life of luxury and pomp. For instance, every morning eulogists, bards, singers and genealogists present

The King and
the Circle round
him.

¹ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, III, XIV, XV.

² Ibid., XXVI.

³ Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, XXVI. Yuddhakāṇḍa, CXII, CXXVIII. Uttarakāṇḍa, LXIII, CVII.

⁴ For the ideal of kingship Nārada's description of Rāma to Vālmiki, Bālākāṇḍa I. Also the delineation of Daśaratha, Ibid., VI.

themselves at his palace.¹ His eldest son was generally associated with him in the task of administration. The knightly age for a prince was sixteen when he could be expected to take the field.² After his marriage he lived apart from his parents.³ A king sometimes also gave his brothers high positions. For instance, king Janaka placed his brother Kuśadhvaja in charge of an important sacrifice. At the king's command he occupied a seat worthy of a king.⁴ The story of the Rāmāyana shows that polygamy, rampant among aristocrats, could occasionally lead to serious political complications. When informed of Daśaratha's command for Rāma's banishment, Kauśalyā bursts out that she had been disregarded by her husband and reduced below the level of her rival Kaikeyi's maid-servants.⁵ A queen seems to have had an 'anger-chamber' where she could retire in moments of high dudgeon, like Kaikeyi, to the discomfiture of her husband.⁶ The daily 'politics' of the harem must have been disturbing while their occasional repercussions on the affairs of the kingdom might have proved calamitous. Not the least attractive feature in Rāma's character is his monogamy.

Throughout the Rāmāyana the Purohita appears as the right-hand man of the king, his constant advisor. The king had eight ministers, who had served the dynasty from father to son. Here is a strong confirmation of the view that high office was often hereditary. They were expected to be upright counsellors, capable administrators, ever intent on the good of the monarch, skilful in divining the motives of others, adepts in dealing tactfully with the people, ever

¹ Bālakāṇḍa, VI; Ayodhyākāṇḍa, LXV.

² Bālakāṇḍa, XX. For the ideal of a prince, see the delineation of Rāma, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, I.

³ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, XVI.

⁴ Bālakāṇḍa, LXX.

⁵ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, XX.

⁶ Ibid., X.

busy in replenishing the treasury and in enrolling troops for the defence of the realm. They should bear no ill-will towards Brāhmanas or Kṣatriyas or the people at large.¹ The priest and ministers could play a higher role in emergencies. When Daśaratha dies of bereavement, they take the situation in hand, send for Bharata from his maternal grandfather's country, press the sovereignty on him, and failing in their endeavour, accompany him to Rāma's forest abode and participate in consultations of high moment.² Sumantra can reprove the queen herself. From a passage in the Yuddhakāṇḍa it appears that ministers fell into two classes, Sacivas and Mantrins and that the term amātya was a general one including both.³ Another passage in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa divides ministers into three classes—Mukhya or chief, Madhyama or middle and Jaghanya or low. In the same section, the Ayodhyākāṇḍa speaks of eighteen Tīrthas or heads of departments of superior and inferior categories.⁴ As in the Mahābhārata, one of the most important offices is that of the ambassador. The lives of envoys are sacrosanct.⁵ Kings had magnificent courts. The Ayodhyākāṇḍa mentions one which consisted of a thousand members.⁶

The capital was well laid out according to plan. Ayodhyā is described as two yojanas (about eight miles in length), though in another passage its dimensions are given as twelve yojanas in length and ten in breadth. It was intersected with roads, wide, straight and beautiful. They were regularly sprinkled with water and on the sides were flower-plants which charmed all eyes with their full-blown

¹ Bālakāṇḍa, VII.

² Ayodhyākāṇḍa, LXXIX, LXXXII, CIV et seq.

³ Yuddhakāṇḍa, CXXX.

⁴ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, C.

⁵ Ibid., CIX;

⁶ Sundarakāṇḍa, LII—LIII.

⁷ Ayodhyākāṇḍa, C.

blossoms. The mansions rose high in the sky and glittered with gems. The city was laid out in four squares. The whole was defended by battlemented towers and moats.¹ Generally, there were four gates though *Laṅkā* is said to have had eight.²

Guilds appear in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as in the *Mahābhārata*.³ There is a reference to *Sayodhasreṇi* which most probably

Guilds. implies a corporation of soldiers, or a guild which combined economic and warlike functions.⁴

The imperative necessity of Government is vividly realised in the *Epic*. In a passage of wonderful eloquence, the poet paints the horrors of anarchy.

The necessity of Government. A realm without a king is like a river without water, a forest without grass and a herd of cattle without the herdsman. The gods themselves frown over kingless regions. In anarchy, there is no rain and no agriculture. Trade disappears. None can feel secure about his property or even his life. The very idea of law goes to the winds. Men prey on each other, like fishes, from hour to hour. Family life and morality fall to the lowest depths. Father and son fight each other, wives get out of hand. Religious practices suffer a woeful decay. *Brāhmaṇas* do not keep their vows. None cares to perform sacrifices with texts and prayers. Sages can be sure of nothing. In short, a country without a king is perfectly wretched. It can witness no happiness, no festivity, no joviality. From such unspeakable misery, the monarch alone rescues the people. He is the universal benefactor, he is father, mother and friend, he is the hope and mainstay of all, he is the right, he is the truth.⁵

¹ *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, V, VI.

² *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, XCIII.

³ *Ibid.*, III, CXL.

⁴ *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, CXXIII.

⁵ *Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, LXVII.

CHAPTER VI.

The Jâtakas.

The literary productions of the Brâhmanas—the Dharma Sûtras, the Epics and later, the Dharma Śâstras—studiously ignore the heretical movements which had arisen or were flourishing contemporaneously. Each school follows its own tradition in a cloister or grove. None can be taken as an exact reflection of the totality of political circumstances in any given epoch. The Brahmanic data are usefully supplemented by Buddhist literature. The faith of Gautama Buddha whose career lay between the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ first took root in Magadha. There as in some neighbouring districts Brahmanic influence was less strong than anywhere else in North India. In the orthodox computation, Kâśī and Magadha are excluded from Brahmarṣideśa. Manu includes Magadhas and Videhas in his list of mixed castes.¹ In the course of a few centuries the Buddhists had produced a literature which challenges comparison with that of the Brâhmanas. The word of the Buddha, according to the orthodox tradition, is contained in the Tripiṭaka or the Three Baskets: (1) Sutta, comprising the five Nikâyas or collections, (2) Vinaya, giving rules of monastic life for monks and nuns in five works, the Pâtimokkha, Mahāvagga, Cullavagga, Sutta-

¹ Manu, X, 5 et seq. Pargiter suggests that in Magadha, the Āryans met and mixed with a body of invaders from the east by sea. (J.R.A.S., 1908, pp. 851–53.) But there is no convincing evidence on the point. According to the Jâtakas, Aṅga and Magadha are conterminous. (II, 21.) On the boundaries of Madhyadeśa see Vinaya Piṭaka, I, 197; Manu, II, 21.

vibhaṅga and Parivara and (3) Abhidhamma, comparatively inferior, which discusses metaphysics in seven compendiums. This extensive canon exists in two versions : (1) in Pāli, the hieratic language of the Buddhists of Ceylon, Siam and Burma, and (2) in Sanskrit or 'mixed' Sanskrit, the sacred idiom of Buddhism in Nepāl, Tibet, and, in a way, also China and Japan. The dates of these works, however, are as doubtful as those of the Brahmanical Sūtras or Epics. Rhys Davids, who relied chiefly on the Pāli canon and tradition, worked on the hypothesis that the four Nikāyas—the Dīgha or Long, the Majjhima or Middle, Saṃyutta or Miscellaneous and Aṅguttara or Numerical—representing the sayings of the Buddha, were put together, "out of older material at a period about half-way between the death of the Buddha, and the accession of Aśoka," that is, in the fourth century B.C. Other sayings, ascribed mostly to the Buddha's disciples, were put into a supplementary fifth Nikāya, the Khuddaka or minor collection, to which additions were made as late as the reign of Aśoka. On the whole, both Rhys Davids and Oldenberg referred the Vinaya and Sutta Piṭakas to about the fourth century B.C. But the scheme is no longer accepted. The dates of the Buddhist councils themselves, including that of the third one believed to have been held under the auspices of Aśoka about 247 B.C., have been called in question.¹ The chronology of the Ceylonese tradition is now almost entirely set aside. It is argued that the whole Buddhist canon is posterior to Aśoka and could not have taken shape prior to the second or first century before Christ. Sylvain Lévi and others have shown that the Pāli idiom itself, in which the southern canon is composed, did not arise till some-time after Aśoka. The great Mauryan emperor does not

¹ On the Buddhist Councils see in particular de la Vallée Poussin, *Ind. Ant.*, XXXVII, pp. 1 et seq.; 81 et seq.

use it in his Edicts. The Buddha as well as his contemporary Mahāvira, the founder or renovator of Jainism, must have preached in some Prākṛit language, Māgadhi or Ardha-Māgadhi. It is impossible to assign any more specific dates to Buddhist scriptures. It is certain that they do not represent the work of a single mind or generation. It is also certain that the Pāli version is earlier than the Sanskrit.¹ The political data which this literature can be pressed to yield have therefore to be used with the utmost caution. Generally, they fall into two classes, either furnishing the names of old states, kings or ministers and recording their deeds, or incidentally reflecting the working of institutions. Facts of the former character are best reserved for treatment in connection with regular political history. The inferential data must be dealt with like those of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana. They are particularly abundant in that portion of the Khuddaka Nikāya which gives the Jātakas, the 547 stories of the Buddha's previous

Jātakas.

births and which is one of the noblest monuments of Buddhist literature. Tradition will have it that these stories were taken by the royal missionary Mahinda to Ceylon during the reign of Aśoka in the third century B.C. They were translated from the Pāli into Sinhalese and back into Pāli by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A.D. It is in this translation of a translation that the Jātakas have come down to us. In accordance with the tradition they were long believed to

¹ On the whole subject, Rhys Davids, Preface to the Dialogues of the Buddha (Sacred Books of the Buddhists), particularly pp. IX—XXII. For his views as well as those of Oldenberg, also S. B. E., Vol. XI, p. X, Vol. XIII, p. XXIII. Rhys Davids, Questions of King Milinda, I, XXXVII et seq. Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, pp. 192—97. G. K. Narayan, Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism (from Winternitz, Sylvain Lévi, Hüber). Sylvain Lévi holds that the Vinaya of the Sanskrit canon was first codified in the third or fourth century after Christ. Kern holds that Pāli was never a spoken language but was an altogether artificial idiom. See also Oldenberg, Introduction to Vinaya Piṭakam, Vol. I, pp. LIV—LV.

mirror the thought and conditions which prevailed before the time of the Buddha. Richard Fick assigned them, as a whole, to the age of Buddha, remarking that "many of the Jātakas are undoubtedly very old and belong, so far as their origin is concerned, to the pre-Buddhistic period."¹ Rhys Davids inclines definitely to the pre-Buddhistic period.² In the last generation of scholars, Max Müller alone perceived that for the text of the Jātakas we must, strictly speaking, be satisfied with the time of Vattagāmani, 88—76 B.C.³ In the light of the latest researches, the position may be summed up in the words of Keith: "The Jātaka book is a strange conglomeration of old and new verses with new prose; some of its tales, as we know from Buddhist sculpture and a stray citation or two, go back to the Aśokan epoch or shortly after; as folklore its contents are often of undeniable age, but as Buddhist fables their antiquity is uncertain."⁴ So, the Jātaka material is to be treated as partly pre-Mauryan and partly post-Mauryan. It pertains primarily to Magadha, and the districts round Benares, though, incidentally, it throws light on

¹ Fick, *Social Organisation in North-Eastern India in Buddha's time*, tr. Maitra, pp. IX—X.

² Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 207.

³ Max Müller, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. I, Preface, p. V.

⁴ Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 22.

The Jātakas have been arranged into twenty-two nipātas, not according to their contents, but according to the number of gāthās or verses occurring therein. The first nipāta has 150 stories, the second 100, the third and fourth 50 each, while the others have much fewer. King Brahmadatta of Benares figures in numerous stories, which may have first arisen in or near the sacred town.

For Jātaka illustrations in the Bas-reliefs on the Bharahut Stūpa, Oldenberg, J. H. D. S., 1897. See also M. Chas. Duroiselle, *Pictorial Representations of Jātakas in Burma*, Ann. Rep., Arch. Sur., Ind., 1912-13, pp. 87—119. Hultzsch, *Jātaka at Bharahut*, J.R.A.S., 1912, pp. 399—411.

regions as far as Takkaśilā on the north-western frontier of India.

Little need be said here of Buddhist social or political theory. On the whole, it is more liberal than the Brahmanical. It could not ignore the deep-

Buddhist
Social Theory.

rooted institution of caste but it refuses to set very much store by it. It does

not believe in the age-long Brahmanic supremacy. It confers no privileges on Brāhmaṇas. It does not constantly advise the king to enforce the principles of the established social order. Buddhist literature habitually places Kṣatriyas before Brāhmaṇas.¹ For political philosophy the Jātakas are not particularly valuable. Their utility consists in the light which they throw on contemporary social, economic and political circumstances. The Jātaka material has been worked out from the economic standpoint by Mrs. Rhys Davids² and from a broad social standpoint by Richard Fick.³ But at least from the political point of view there is room for further research and fresh conclusions.

That caste with its appendage of outcaste prevailed in the country is clear from the Jātakas. In the Setaketu

¹ For the Buddhist fanciful golden age, its degeneration and the consequent rise of the family, private property and state, see *Aganna Suttanta*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. III, Section 27; Mahāvastu ed. Senart, I, 847-48; Rockhill, 'Life of the Buddha . . . derived from Tibetan works in the Bkah Hgyur and Bstan Hgyur,' pp. 1-7. Cf. the Burmese *Damathat*, tr. Richardson, p. 7. Also Spence Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 68. For Buddhist attitude towards caste, *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 1, 16; III, 1, 24; *Majjhima Nikāya*, 90, *Kaṇṇakathala Sutta* 84; *Madhura Sutta*; *Ullavagga*, IX, 1, 4. *Dhammapada*, Ch. XXVI, tr. Max Müller, 90-96. *Udānavarga*, tr. Rockhill, Ch. XXXIII. *Nidānakathā*, I, 49. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 114-17, 119-22, 144-59. For general political theory, also *Lalitavistara*, particularly, 14-15, 103, 181, 186. *Āryadeva, Catuṣṣataka Sāstra* (P. L. Vaidya, *Études sur Āryadeva et son Catuṣṣataka*, H. P. Sāstrī, *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. III, No. 8, pp. 449-514).

² J. R. A. S., 1901.

³ *Social Organisation in North-east India in Buddha's time.*

Jātaka (III, 233) a Brāhmaṇa runs away from a Caṇḍāla and seeks atmospheric purification. In the Mātanga Jātaka (IV, 388) a Brāhmaṇa ascetic finds a tooth-pick, thrown by a Caṇḍāla up the river, caught in a tuft of his hair. "Damn you," he cries, "wretched Caṇḍāla, you bird of evil omen, you shall not live here any longer, move your dwelling down the river."

In the next, Citta Sambhūta Jātaka (IV, 391-2), two Caṇḍāla brothers are beaten almost to death because at their sight two high-class maidens abandon a visit which, incidentally, would have brought food and drink gratis to the people.¹ The unfortunate men disguise themselves as Brāhmaṇas and go to Takkaśilā for study, but when their birth is discovered they are again thrashed. (See also IV, 388.) In IV, 144, a Kṣatriya can't eat with his daughter by a slave, and a discussion is raised whether the children of a Kṣatriya by a low-caste woman are to be treated as Kṣatriyas. At one moment it is recognised that the family of the mother does not matter, that of the father alone is important. In I, 134, a woman who gathered wood is installed as Aggamahesi, chief queen, and the vicegerency is conferred on her son. Considerations of caste rule marriage (IV, 376, III, 422, III, 162, IV, 22, III, 93, I, 199, II, 121, II, 225). In IV, 231, a princess descends from a tree to meet an ascetic prince only when she is assured that he is a Kṣatriya and can recite the Kṣatriya formula. On the other hand, a king offers his daughter in marriage to a Brāhmaṇa ascetic (III, 517). In III, 27, a Caṇḍāla wins the favour of a king by pointing out the impropriety of the latter's occupying a seat higher than that of the priest who was explaining the Veda to him. The Caṇḍāla is made king of the night, that is, town sentinel, nagaraguttika.

¹ For another similar incident, IV, 378.

In III, 194 sq., the Purohita of a Benares king, after a self-imposed test, comes to the conclusion that virtue is better than learning, that birth and caste cause conceit . . . Khattiya (Kṣatriya), Brāhmaṇa, Vessa (Vaiśya), Sudda (Śūdra), Caṇḍāla and Pukkusa will all be equal in the world of the gods, if they have acted virtuously here. Ambā Jātaka (IV, 205) also says that among members of all the six divisions he is the best from whom one can learn what is right. In Tittira Jātaka (I, 217), the Buddha, after an untoward incident asks the assembly of monks, "Who deserves to have the best quarters, the best water, the best food?" Some replied, "He who was a Kṣatriya before he became initiated." Others replied, "He who was a Brāhmaṇa or a Gahapati." The Buddha, however, would not recognise the claims of birth at all. The caste rules of professions are often violated. There are, of course, numerous 'world-renowned' Brāhmaṇa teachers, surrounded by crowds of, say, 500 pupils each (I, 166, 239, 299, 317, 402, 436 ; II, 137, 260, 421, III, 215), but Brāhmaṇas also work as land-owners (III, 293 ; IV, 276), agriculturists (II, 165 ; III, 163 ; V, 68), merchants (IV, 7, 15 ; V, 22, 471), archers (V, 127), hunters and tappers (II, 200 ; VI, 170), wheel-wrights (IV, 207). Many Brāhmaṇas accumulate vast amounts of wealth (II, 272 ; III, 39 ; VI, 15, 22, 28, 237, 325 ; V, 227).¹ Brāhmaṇas sometimes eat with Kṣatriyas (II, 319-20). Aristocrats themselves sometimes act as traders or servants (II, 87 ; IV, 84, 169).

In the Dasabrāhmaṇa Jātaka a debate between two young men on birth or action as the basis of caste is referred to Gautama who declares that the followers of pastoral, agricultural, industrial, commercial or martial pursuits could not be called Brāhmaṇas. The obvious

Brahmanic
supremacy ques-
tioned.

¹ Cf. Vāseṭṭh Sutta, No. 85 of the Sutta Nipāta.

allusion is to those who claimed Brahmanic privileges on the score of caste though they had renounced scholastic or priestly callings. In many stories, for instance, in the *Sambhava Jātaka*, V, 27, *Juṇha Jātaka*, IV, 96, *Brāhmaṇas* play a rather ignominious role. (Also in I, 425, IV, 484.) On the other hand, the Buddhists themselves occasionally laid emphasis on birth. In the *Nidānakathā* (I, 2) the first *Bodhisatta* is *Brāhmaṇa* of good family, on both sides, up to the seventh generation. The *Jambukhādaka Jātaka* (II, 438) speaks of descent as implying nobility.

The rule of *Āśramas* or the four stages of life stands on a footing with that of caste. It is held to be binding

Āśramas.

(II, 85, 394; III, 147, 352), but it is not observed in all its strictness. Apart from the probability that numberless persons might have undergone no 'studentship,' nor ever resorted to renunciation, the order of the *Āśramas* is often violated. There are instances of *Brāhmaṇas* who take to asceticism on reaching adolescence (I, 333, 343, 361, 373, 450; II, 131, 232, 257, 262; III, 110; IV, 325). In many cases the completion of studies is immediately followed up by renunciation (II, 53, 56, 72, 85; III, 64, 79, 110, 119, 228, 249, 308; V, 152, 193). There are instances of parents offering the alternatives of family life and renunciation to their sons. A *Brāhmaṇa* boy in his 16th year is thus addressed by his parents, "Son, on the day of your birth we lit a birth-fire for you. Now therefore choose. If you wish to lead a family life, learn the three Vedas; but if you wish to attain to the *Brahma* realm, take your fire with you into the forest and there tend it, so as to win *Mahā-Brahma*'s favour and hereafter to enter into the *Brahma* realm." The latter alternative was preferred by the boy (I, 494). In II, 43, there occurs an almost identical incident. The third stage is often passed over (II, 41, 145, 269; 437; III, 45). The birth of a son, is sometimes the signal of renunciation to

Brāhmaṇas and others (III, 300-301; IV, 220). Untoward happenings sometimes led to the same result. A son of a hunter chief and a daughter of another hunter chief were married against their will. Both turned ascetics (IV, 72). On his parents' death, a Brāhmaṇa forsakes the world (II, 314; also 411). Another does the same on the death of his wife (III, 147). The vogue of renunciation sometimes disturbed political arrangements. A prince turns an ascetic as he is to be consecrated king after the usual processions (IV, 492 et seq.). Elsewhere two princes, bent on renunciation, are earnestly exhorted by their parents to stick to the world but in vain (IV, 121-22). There are other cases of princes spurning all earthly dominion and glory and taking to renunciation (III, 31).

In the Jātakas there is a ruling class, consisting primarily of Kṣatriyas, which stands above all and which typifies the state. Its members are not to be addressed by name or in the second person by people of low castes. In his pride a king calls a Purohita's son Hinajacca, 'of low birth' (V, 257). For the primacy of the ruling class, I, 177; III, 19; IV, 42, 205, 303; V, 123). Purohitas or their sons, however, are admitted to intimacy with kings, princes and aristocrats (I, 437, 289; II, 47, 282, 376, 437; III, 31, 317, 392, 417, 455; IV, 200, 270; V, 127; VI, 330). Others are also sometimes admitted into the high circle. Thus Prince Brahmadatta and Mahādhana, son of a rich merchant, are comrades and playmates and are brought up with the same teachers. On succeeding to the throne, Brahmadatta receives Mahādhana thrice a day. When the latter, losing faith in his courtesan, renounces the world, the king summons "the wicked, vile woman" and commands her to "go quickly to where my friend is and fetch him; if you fail, your life is forfeit" (III, 476).

Kṣatriyas generally wielded the sceptre but non-Kṣatriya kingship was not altogether unknown. Thus in

Jātaka, I, 326, the expulsion of a tyrannical king is followed by the elevation of a
 Non-Kṣatriya
 Kingship.

Brāhmaṇa to the throne. Similarly, in the Padakusalānāṇava Jātaka (III, 513) a Brāhmaṇa who instigates a revolt against a thievish king and thus brings about his death is installed king (see also II, 264 et seq.).

The sons of aristocratic families were educated, along with Brāhmaṇa youths, at Takkaśilā on the north-western

Takkaśilā.

frontier. It seems to have been one of the most notable seats of learning in ancient India. On the basis of contemporary Greek accounts, Pliny states that the town itself was situated on a level where the hills sink down into the plain. Strabo praises the soil as extremely fertile from the number of its springs and water-courses. In Ptolemy's geography it is called Taxiala, probably from the Sanskrit Takṣaśilā, hewn stone or Takṣakaśilā, i.e., rock of Takṣaka, the Nāga king, though others take it to be derived from the Takkas, a powerful tribe which probably occupied the regions between the Indus and the Chenāb. It seems to have been an extremely rich town. There is a myth in a Jātaka that a Benares king attacked Takkaśilā, but amazed at the rich glory of its gate tower which he fancied to be the king's residence, he abandoned the expedition (II, 217-8). Jaina literature, which contains numerous references to Takkaśilā, shows that it was at one time adorned with vast numbers of Jaina edifices.

Here were established a large number of teachers who taught for fees and sometimes gratis. On his arrival at Takkaśilā, a Benares prince encounters his future teacher, as the latter is walking to and fro after finishing his teaching. The young man at once takes off his shoes, removes his umbrella, and stands saluting him with respect. The

teacher welcomes him and, after he is refreshed, inquires, "Where do you come from?" "From Benares." "Whose son are you?" "The son of the king of Benares." "For what purpose have you come?" "For the purpose of learning the science." "Have you brought your *âcariyabhâga* (teacher's honorarium) or do you wish to become a *dham-mantevâsika*?" "I have brought honorarium for the teacher." Forthwith the prince placed a purse of a 1,000 gold pieces at his feet. That seems to have been the usual fee (*Tilamutthi Jâtaka*, II, 278). Those who paid the fee were treated like the eldest sons in houses. Besides the fees from pupils, the teachers of *Takkasilâ* received invitations and presents from the neighbouring folk (III, 171).¹

Hither flocked the sons of kings, aristocrats, priests and plutocrats for education.² Sometimes, indeed, princes were educated at home. In the *Gâmanicanda Jâtaka* (II, 297), a king himself instructs the prince in the three Vedas and in all worldly duties. The *Tilamutthi Jâtaka* (II, 277), however, says that "the kings sent their sons, although in their own city there lived a world-renowned teacher, to a great distance over the borders of the kingdom for learning the sciences, and they thought, in this way their pride and haughtiness will be broken, they will learn

¹ For *Takkasilâ*, *Takṣasilâ* or *Taxila*, see McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 342; India as described in Classical Literature, Strabo, pp. 33-34. Also *J. R. A. S.*, XX, p. 343. *Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind.*, 1914-15, Marshall, pp. 1-85; Sukthankar, pp. 36-41; Marshall, *Ibid.*, 1912-13, pp. 1-52; *Ibid.*, 1915-16, pp. 1-38. K. de B. Codrington, *Ancient India*, etc., 47-49; also pp. 49-56 for the contemporary Gandhâran art and sculpture. Marshall, *a Guide to Taxila*, second edition, Calcutta, 1921. For a seventh century notice, Yuan Chwang, *Watters*, I, 240.

² For instances of princes going to *Takkasilâ*, I, 273; II, 319, 323, 400; III, 158, 163, 415, 463; IV, 315; V, 161. For wealthy Brâhmanas, sometimes worth 80 crores each, sending their sons to *Takkasilâ*, I, 463, 505, 510; II, 53, 56, 85; III, 39, 64, 158, 219, 423, 194, 238, 341, 352, 400, 403, 497; IV, 22, 74, 200, 224; V, 247, 263. For sons of plutocrats, III, 375; IV, 475.

to bear heat and cold, and learn also the ways of the world." Here a king gives his son only a pair of sandals with simple soles, a sunshade made of leaves and 1,000 kahâpanas and sends him to rough it out at Takkasilâ (Cf. V, 457). The journey to Takkasilâ itself lay through forests (I, 395). Some adventurous youths were not satisfied with the usual experiences. A prince and a Purohita's son, after finishing their education at Takkasilâ, wander about to observe various local usages (V, 247). It was generally at the age of sixteen that princes joined Takkasilâ (I, 259, 262, 273; II, 2, 87, 277; III, 122, etc.). Probably they had already received some literary and military instruction at home. There are, however, cases of princes completing their education at sixteen and not resorting to Takkasilâ at all (e.g., I, 261). The education of a prince was a comprehensive one. In I, 259, and III, 115, the three Vedas and eighteen branches of learning are mentioned as subjects of study. In II, 87, a Benares prince learns the three Vedas, archery and eighteen accomplishments at Takkasilâ. Elsewhere, too, (III, 122, 158), we can see the princes and Brâhmanas studying together. In II, 100, the son of a wealthy Brâhmana learns charms at Takkasilâ and then teaches them to Brâhmana and Kṣatriya youths. At Takkasilâ every student studied under a teacher and had to attend on him. If he offended, he could be punished, even corporally. A Benares prince, so treated, vows vengeance and, on ascending the throne, contrives almost to kill his teacher, though, later, he makes ample amends for it (II, 278 et seq.).

In the Jâtakas the king is a despot. Different stories imply different theories of the foundation of his power. Once a Yakkhini (Yakṣiṇī) who becomes the favourite consort of a king solicits from him the boon of unrestricted power over his dominion. "My love,"

The King.

replies the king, "in no way do all the subjects of my kingdom belong to me, nor am I their lord; only over those who rise against the king and do wrong am I lord. Therefore I cannot give you unrestricted power over the whole kingdom" (I, 398). Here the king is the guardian and censor rather than the master of his subjects and is not supposed to be capable of dealing with the kingdom as he likes. But elsewhere a king is prepared of his own accord to make over his kingdom to an ascetic (III, 80, also 353). In another curious story, when the queen-mother falls in love with the Purohita, the king makes the latter king, his own mother queen and himself acts as viceroy (III, 392). Once a king actually divides his kingdom with a poor man and the two rule in harmony and friendship until the new half-king embraces asceticism (III, 448-49). In these stories the kingdom is looked upon almost as private property which can be partitioned or surrendered at will. Both the different conceptions may be true of the different places or times.

The character of the despotism varied according to the personal equation. The Dasarâjadhamme or ten duties of the king (III, 274, 320)

The character
of monarchical
rule.

comprise charity, moral rectitude, sacrifice, truthfulness, mildness, self-denial, forgiveness, not to cause any pain to anybody, patience, a yielding disposition. In the Jâtakas, kings are often just, righteous, merciful and charitable. But a king could sometimes be a whimsical tyrant who, as a Jâtaka (II, 240) puts it, "oppresses and puts down his subjects by punishments, taxes, torture and robbery, as one pounds sugar in a sugar mill, who is as odious to them as a particle of dust in the eye, as a particle of sand in the rice or as a thorn that has pierced the hand." An oppressive king sucks the country dry of all wealth (IV, 224). Another capricious tyrant took a dislike to all old

things and made cruel sport of old men and women (II, 142). Another seized the wife of a hermit though he restored her later (IV, 23). Numerous other cases of tyranny can be cited (II, 122, 169, 391; III, 178, 454; V, 98). Sometimes the merits of spiritual or temporal ministers could make up for the defects of a king (III, 317) but in the absence of any constitutional check the ultimate remedy for oppression lay in revolt and assassination. In the *Saccamkara Jātaka* (I, 326) a king is driven out of the town by the enraged

Revolt.

Kṣatriyas, Brāhmaṇas and others who instal a Brāhmaṇa on the throne. In the *Pudakusalamāgava Jātaka* (III, 513) a Brāhmaṇa discovers that a king and his priest have stolen and concealed a precious treasure. He contrives to get the people together and proclaims aloud:—

"Let town and countryfolk assembled all give ear,

"Lo, water is ablaze. From safety cometh fear. The plundered realm may well of king and priest complain. Henceforth protect yourselves. Your refuge proves your bane." The people thought, "the king, though he ought to have protected others, threw the blame on another. . . . That he may not in future go on playing the part of a thief, we will kill this wicked king." "So they rose up with sticks and clubs in their hands, and then and there beat the king and the priest till they died." The Brāhmaṇa, responsible for all this, was proclaimed king. Another king is persuaded by a hypocritical Purohita to sacrifice his queens, sons, best horses and bulls so that he might go to heaven. The plot is frustrated and only Sakka, the god of gods, prevents the multitude from killing the king. The people agree to spare his life, "but," they decide, "we will not give him rule or dwelling in this city—we will make him an outcast and appoint his dwelling outside this city." So they stripped him of his royal garments, made him wear a yellow dress, put a yellow cloth on

his head, and having made him an outcast sent him away to an outcast settlement. But the prince continued to attend to his wants there (VI, 146 et seq.). Elsewhere a significant tradition is recorded that a king who violated righteousness was swallowed up by flames from the earth and his sons had to leave the city (III, 458 et seq.).

In the Jâtakas the hereditary succession and primogeniture are firmly established (I, 127, 395; II, 87, 116, 212; IV, 124, 176). In Thusa Jâtaka (III, 121) a prince imprisoned for treason is set

The succession. at liberty on the death of his father and duly placed on the throne. So not even treason, one of the darkest of crimes in ancient India, was deemed serious enough for a departure from the rule. In Succaja Jâtaka (III, 67) a king says to the prince, "My dear son, so long as I am living, you shall not live in the town; remove your residence elsewhere and accept the reins of government after my death." A few similar incidents occur elsewhere in the Jâtakas (II, 203, 229; VI, 158). It appears, however, that in certain localities or periods reflected in the Jâtakas, a slightly different practice prevailed. The hereditary principle was qualified by that of capacity. In II, 297, the ministers tell a rather young prince that he will be consecrated only on satisfying certain tests which pertain to the administration of justice. In the Pâdañjali Jâtaka (II, 264) King Brahmadatta of Benares—the usual Jâtaka hero—leaves a stupid son behind. The ministers propose to instal him on the throne, but the Bodhisatta, who happened to be the late king's spiritual and temporal adviser, said "the prince is a fool and a good-for-nothing fellow; we will first examine him and then instal him as king." The nature of the test proposed shows that the king must, above all, be qualified to administer faultless justice. The ministers held two courts and gave once the correct and

once an incorrect judgment, but the prince, incapable of distinguishing between the two, only bit his lips both times. "This man," said the Bodhisatta, "does not know right from wrong, or good from bad; beyond the biting of his lips he knows nothing." So the ministers consecrated the Bodhisatta himself, a Brâhmaṇa, to the kingship. In such cases the ministers are the judges of the capacity to rule and can deal comparatively freely with the crown. In any case acute physical incapacity was regarded a disqualification for the kingship. In spite of protests a king gives his eyes to a Brâhmaṇa and then thinks, "What has a blind man to do with ruling? I will hand over my kingdom to the courtiers, and go into my park and become an ascetic and live as a holy man" (IV, 407 et seq.) Another king struck with leprosy similarly departs into the forest (V, 88). The people in the Jâtakas are extremely anxious to make sure of the regular succession. When after their earnest prayers to the deities the queen-consort of a childless king gets a son, they exclaim, "We were before helpless, now we have a help, we have obtained a lord" (VI, 1). In another tale when a monogamous king had no son, the townsfolk gathered together in the palace courtyard and raised a howl. "What is it?" asked the king. "Fault we have none to find," said they, "but this that you have no son to keep up your line. You have but one queen, yet a royal prince should have 16,000 at the least. Choose a company of women, my lord, some worthy wife will bring you a son." The king, however, refused to flinch from his previous promise of monogamy. Then the queen herself presented to him 1,000 Kṣatriya maidens, 1,000 Mahāmatta maidens, 1,000 gahapati maidens, and 1,000 dancing girls. Later, she presented another host of 12,000 women to the king (IV, 316 et seq.) In another story, all decency, morality and prestige are thrown to the winds in order to obtain a son to succeed to the throne (V, 279 et seq.)

Royal idiosyncrasies could sometimes disturb the rule of primogeniture. A Benares king gives a province to each of his hundred sons as his education at the hands of a courtier is finished. The youngest, Saṁvara, however, chooses to live at court. The ministers ask the king on his death-bed, "When you are dead . . . to whom shall we give the White Umbrella?" "Friends," replies the king, "all my sons have a right to the White Umbrella. But you may give it to him that pleases your mind." On the seventh day after the king's death, the courtiers uplift the White Umbrella with its festoons of gold over the youngest prince. On hearing of his accession, his ninety-nine brothers say, "He is the youngest of all; the Umbrella does not belong to him. Let us lift the Umbrella over the eldest of us all." They besiege the capital but Saṁvara offers to divide his wealth among them. Peace is concluded and Saṁvara is recognised (IV, 131 et seq.). In another story, the elder prince at first declines the kingdom but later demands it and gets it from his younger brother who had been reigning in the meanwhile (IV, 168 et seq.). In IV, 84, a kingdom is divided among ten brothers. One of them gives his share to their sister, only stipulating that he should receive the taxes due to him. These stories may relate to a period or a locality in which the practice of primogeniture was arising but was not yet fully established. Elsewhere in the Jātakas a king resists the importunity of his queen to give the kingdom to their son, because the latter is 'ill-luck.' Not even temporarily for some years or some months or some weeks but only for a single week would he place him on the throne. The prince's seven days' sovereignty is proclaimed throughout the city by beat of drum. He is led round the city triumphantly on an elephant under an umbrella, but on the sixth day his father has him beheaded (VI, 10 et seq.).

On failure of sons, the crown seems to have gone to the eldest of the younger brothers of a king (I, 133; II, 367). In certain contingencies in the absence of direct heirs, the crown seems to go to the son-in-law of a king (II, 323). In no circumstances is the crown formally placed on the head of a woman. There is an incidental statement that "infamous . . . is the land which owns a woman's sway and rule; and infamous are the men who yield themselves to women's dominion" (I, 155). Women, however, did sometimes wield the actual sovereignty. In IV, 105, on Udaya's death no king was set up, the commands of his widow Udayabhaddā were promulgated and the Mahāmattas administered the kingdom. In IV, 84, a brother gives his own share—one-tenth of a kingdom—to his sister but we are not told that the latter was duly crowned. In a few stories the crown is offered to whomsoever the people think fit (e.g., I, 399). Once on the tragic death of a king of Takkasilā, the Bodhisatta who happened to be the youngest of the hundred sons of Brahmadata of Benares, is elected king by the courtiers and citizens who admire his self-control. In another story a childless king and his Purohita vow that if either gets a son, he should succeed to the kingdom and to the wealth of both. Thanks to a deity, the Purohita got four sons. But in spite of all possible precautions, the four young men renounce their claims to the sceptre and turn ascetic one after another (IV, 473). It is, however, significant that this story recognises the validity of a king willing the crown out of the royal family.

If the succession was altogether unsettled, recourse was had, perhaps only in some out-of-the way regions, to a strange procedure. Seven days after the death of an heirless king, the Purohita let a festal car, the phussaratha, be driven with the five insignia of royalty placed on it. "It will come to the man who will become the king." The man whom

Choice by the
festal car.

the car singled out by stopping near him was made king (III, 238; IV, 39; V, 248). Once fortune favoured a poor woman's son born in the street (IV, 38). This method might sometimes be combined with another. A king on his death-bed leaves the succession to the will of his daughter who is approached by the various officers but she rejects them all and proposes three tests. Meanwhile, the Purohita and the ministers let out the festal car. It selects the Bodhisatta who also satisfies the three tests of the princess and becomes king (VI, 31 et seq.).

The whole problem of the succession was complicated by premature ambitions, jealousies and the vogue of renunciation. A prince, acting as viceroy, conspires against the king, his elder brother. When discovered he flies to a frontier

Relations between kings and princes.

district and demands the umbrella or a battle. In the ensuing war the king is slain (VI, 31). Another prince appointed viceroy grows impatient of the crown, conspires and murders the king (V, 263 et seq.). A sixteen-year-old prince tries various expedients to kill his father. When detected, he is imprisoned (III, 122 et seq., also 216). A prince-governor comes to the capital, Benares, to pay his respects to his father. The latter thinks, "This fellow may do me wrong, if he gets an opportunity." So he tells him, "As long as I live, you cannot dwell in this city. Live somewhere else, and at my death bear rule in the kingdom." The prince obeys and leaves Benares with his chief wife (III, 67). In another story too horrible to relate, a Benares king, afraid that his wife might grow too proud of their little son, has the seven-month-old baby torn to pieces, bit by bit, in the presence of his weeping mother (III, 179). A suspicious king exiles all his sons (II, 116). On the death of a king, the eldest prince succeeds to the throne in the regular order and the younger becomes Uparâjan but he grows arrogant as the astrologers have foretold universal

dominion for his son. A command is issued for his arrest but he flies to the forest (IV, 230 et seq.). In another story the elder prince at first declines the kingdom but later demands it and gets it from his younger brother who had been reigning in the meanwhile (IV, 168 et seq.). Moral delinquency sometimes went against a prince. Thus a prince who refused to give up strong drink was banished (V, 467). On the other hand, the sway of the gospel of renunciation sometimes led kings to instal their sons on the throne and themselves to retire into the forest (V, 161-62). In VI, 95 et seq., a barber points out the appearance of grey hair on the head of a king. The latter forthwith instals his son on the throne, rewards the barber with a village and retires into the forest. Sometimes a prince, caring 'nothing for glory,' would voluntarily decline the crown in favour of a younger brother, though he may still awaken jealousies (II, 87). In an interesting story a king invites his brother suddenly found out, to come and reign as king (V, 22 et seq.). There are numerous instances, of kings abdicating in favour of their sons and of young princes prematurely following the path of renunciation and refusing consecration (I, 138; III, 364, 393, 515; IV, 7; V, 177). There are other cases of young princes being persuaded only with the greatest difficulty to assume the sceptre (IV, 105).

In some localities or periods, the new king had to be accepted by the people. A wicked prince who is advised in vain by counsellors, Brâhmanas and citizens to mend his ways is at last thus threatened by the Bodhisatta, "the people of the kingdom, dreading what a prince so fierce and passionate may become when king, will not place you on the throne but uproot you . . . and drive you forth to exile" (I, 507).

Consecration was an important ceremony in the age of the Jâtakas. As in Brahmanical literature, the Purohita

sprinkled the king-designate with water and so raised

him high above ordinary mortals (III, 239; IV, 40). In III, 408, the ministers,

Brāhmaṇas, gaḥapatis, citizens and dancing girls, stand round the throne at a distance from each other. In the Pañcaguru Jātaka (I, 470), the Bodhisatta accepting the kingdom at the people's hands, enters the town, decorated in heavenly style, and passes "into the spacious hall of the palace and there seated himself . . . on his jewelled throne beneath the white umbrella of his kingship. Round him in glittering splendour stood his ministers and Brāhmaṇas and nobles, whilst sixteen thousand nautch girls, fair as the nymphs of heaven, sang and danced and made music, till the palace was loud with sounds like the ocean when the storm bursts in thunder on the waves."

The consecration and its pomp are well-described in the Ayoghava Jātaka (IV, 492 et seq.) "What is my son's age?" asks a king. "He is sixteen years old," reply the courtiers. The king determines to make over the realm to the prince who is brought out. The whole city is decorated from end to end. "They decked out the state elephant in magnificent caparison, and dressed the boy in his best, and placed him upon the elephant's back," saying, "My lord, make a circuit rightwise about the rejoicing city, your inheritance, and salute your father the king of Kāsi; for this day you shall receive the White Umbrella." After the procession the prince stood before the king. "What do you wish us to do?" asked the courtiers. "Take my son," replied the king, "and put him on a pile of jewels, sprinkle him from the three conches, uplift the White Umbrella with its festoons of gold" (IV, 492 et seq.)

There are other pictures of festivities, dramatic performances, etc., on the occasion of a prince's marriage or accession. The rejoicings were often signalised by a release of prisoners (V, 232 et seq.)

The king lived in great splendour. Once we see him "seated in majesty and splendour beneath a white canopy of sovereignty upon a throne of gold with legs as of a gazelle . . ." (I, 267). On return from expeditions, he generally goes in solemn procession round the city and then enters the palace (I, 305). Seated on an elephant, the king often went round the city in stately procession (II, 122). Kings vie with one another in splendour. For instance, a Benares king thinks, "All over India the kings live in a palace supported by many a column . . . What if I make a palace with one column only to support it? Then I shall be the chiefest king of all kings" (IV, 153).

Sometimes there were glorious wrestling matches. Once we read, "the wrestling ring was prepared in front of the king's gate; there was an enclosure for the games, the ring was decked out gaily, the flags of victory were ready tied. The whole city was in a whirl; line over line rose above the seats, tier above tier" (IV, 81). A musical scene is thus described: "At the palace door a pavilion was set up, and a throne was set apart for the king. He came down from the palace, and took his seat upon the divan in the gay pavilion. All around him were thousands of slaves, women beauteously apparelled, courtiers, Brâhmanas, citizens. All the people of the town had come together. In the courtyard they were fixing the seats circle on circle, tier above tier . . ." (II, 253). Kings are seen going to the park surrounded by dancers (III, 40). As usual they are fond of hunting (III, 325). The fortnightly fast seems to have been the occasion of great festivity. The place of meeting is decorated; king, viceroys and others listen to discourses (III, 342). The king sometimes holds wine orgies (V, 13 et seq.) There were gorgeous elephant festivals (V, 282 et seq.)

Part of the royal splendour was the harem. When a king and queen of Benares determine to marry their daughter only to a monogamous prince, the

The harem.

ambassadors of a suitor, the king of Mithilā remark, "Ours is a great kingdom, the city of Mithilā covers seven leagues and the measure of the whole kingdom is 300 leagues. Such a king should have 16,000 wives at the least . . ." (IV, 316 et seq.) A king of Videha is said to have possessed a harem of 16,000 wives (VI, 220). So, too, Daśaratha, king of Kośala (IV, 124 et seq.) The high traditional number may be taken to imply that almost every king had a large seraglio. The harem had its own 'politics.' A king takes a flower-selling girl into the harem, raises her to the position of chief queen, then disgraces her and finally rehabilitates her (III, 21). Another king raised the helpmate of his troubles to be the chief queen but otherwise neglected her. The Bodhisatta had to exert himself to bring about a thorough reconciliation (III, 68, also 107-108). The rivalries and jealousies of co-wives were proverbial (V, 21). The affairs of the harem sometimes had serious repercussions on affairs of state. In the extremely interesting Jātaka version of Rāma's tale, the queen-consort of Daśaratha is succeeded on her death by another who, in response to the offer of a boon, requests the supersession of the two elder princes by her own son. Informed by soothsayers that he has still twelve years to live, the old king tells Rāma and Lakṣhaṇa, "My sons, if you live here, some mischief may befall you. Go to some neighbouring kingdom, or to the woodland, and when my body is burnt, then return and inherit the kingdom which belongs to your family . . ." They and their sister Sitā go to the Himālayas. On the king's demise in 9 years, the queen-consort desires that the umbrella should be raised over her son Bharata. But the courtiers did not allow it, saying, 'the lords of the umbrella are dwelling in the

forest.' Accompanied by a complete host of the four arms, Bharata himself proceeded to the forest with the fine insignia of royalty for Râma. When Râma refused to return until the completion of the full twelve years, the rest came back but for the next three years the slippers of Râma were supposed to rule the kingdom. The ministers placed them on the royal throne when they judged a cause (IV, 124 et seq.). More unsavoury situations were sometimes created. A prince-vice-roy, falsely incriminated by a jilted step-mother, is sentenced by the enraged king to be taken to the thieves' cliff and beheaded. The nobles, the ministers, and many harem ladies protest. But the king is adamant (IV, 191). The harem was strongly guarded (IV, 105). But nothing could prevent occasional criminal liaison. Guilty of misconduct in the harem, a minister is told by the king, "Oblinded by folly! you have sinned, and are not worthy to dwell in my kingdom; take your substance and your wife and family and go hence." The minister migrates to Kośala and becomes the confidential adviser of the Kośala king. He instigates border raids and a regular invasion against his old master (I, 262 et seq.). Several such incidents are recorded in the Jâtakas (II, 125-26, 401; III, 13, 168 et seq., 337 et seq.). In another story, a royal servant becomes a paramour of the queen, murders the king and buries him. The prince, however, does the same to the murderer and amply revenges the wrong (III, 419 et seq.). There is one instance of an Uparâjan intriguing in the harem of the king, his own brother (IV, 79).

A pleasanter side of court life was the charity practised on a lavish scale. It must have gone a long way to win the loyalty of the people and enhance the prestige of the king. A king of Benares

Royal Charity.

"built six halls of bounty, one at each of the four gates, one in the midst of the city, and one before the palace;

and every day he distributed in gifts six hundred thousand pieces of money." The monarch himself went among the needy and the miserable and showered bounties. The whole country was astir with his generosity (II, 118). Identical statements are made of many other kings (IV, 176, 355, 361 et seq., 402; V, 162; VI, 42 et seq.) Beggars and mendicants are often at the king's window (II, 273). In spite of the pomp and glory which surrounded him, a king could unbend on occasions. We see a king moving freely among his subjects (IV, 201). Another greets a mendicant, sets him on his own couch, and offers him all the delicious dishes prepared for himself (II, 273). Another king led an ascetic "to a dais and set him upon the throne under a white umbrella; his own food the king gave him to eat and himself ate of it. Then he took him to the garden, and caused a covered walk and dwelling to be made for him, and furnished him with all the necessities of an ascetic" (II, 316). Similar incidents are recorded elsewhere (III, 79 et seq.). The king's example of charity was imitated by his wealthy subjects. A Benâres merchant worth eighty crores established six almshouses at the usual spots and in the usual style. We are told that 600,000 beggars partook of his generosity each day (III, 129; also IV, 355 et seq.). A royal treasurer practises charity on the same scale and in the same manner (V, 383 et seq.).

The king was the motive force of the whole government. One of his principal duties was the administration of justice. He is often an original tribunal and sometimes open to suggestion or protest from his Purohita or minister of justice (I, 433; III, 232). The king is often prompted to summary justice. A man is brought before him. "What is this, my friend?" enquires the king. They reply, "here's a thief who has been robbing your majesty's treasury." "Away with him to execution." The accused, however, has

Duties of the
King.

the courage to expostulate and is released (I, 371). Elsewhere, too, a criminal is hauled up in the very first instance before the king (I, 384; see also II, 298 et seq.) In the Rathalaṭṭhi Jātaka (III, 104) a Purohita of the king falsely accuses some cart-drivers of striking him. The king promptly commands the drivers to give up their horses by way of punishment. The minister who happened to be the Bodhisatta, expostulates, persuades the king to hear the other side and so leads him to give the correct judgment. There were, of course, many cases which were decided by the officers of the king without reference to him (II, 182; V, 299).

The king must promote morality and sometimes adopts rough and ready homely ways of doing so. Succeeding Brahmādatta as king of Benâres, the Bodhisatta summons his ministers, Brâhmanas, gentry and others and, with their consent, proclaims, by beat of drum, that in fulfilment of his princely vow, he would make a sacrifice of a thousand sinners (I, 260). The people believe that everything depended on the king. Figs are sweet when the king exercises his rule with justice and equity. But "in the time of unjust kings, oil, honey, molasses and the like, as well as wild roots and fruits, lose their sweetness and flavour; and not these only but the whole realm becomes bad and flavourless" (III, 111). The king did sometimes play the rôle of a moral teacher. Twice a month, for instance, a king would gather his subjects together and say, "Give alms, practise virtue, righteously follow your business and calling, educate yourselves in the days of your youth, gain wealth, do not behave like a village cheat or dog, be not harsh or cruel, do your duty in caring for mother and for father, in family life honour your elders" (IV, 176-7, also, 361 et seq.). Some kings were particularly anxious to provide for the comforts of hermits and travellers. For instance, one of them provides a park to shelter them, in particular during the rains (IV, 444).

Next to the king stood the Uparâjan, brother or son or other kinsman of the king. In IV, 79, on the death of a

king, the elder prince becomes king while the younger is appointed Uparâjan almost automatically. He is the "sub-king," a vicegerent, in constant touch with the king. In the Kurudhamma Jâtaka, the Uparâjan waits every evening on the king and receives the greetings of the people on entering or leaving the palace. On ceremonial occasions he sits behind the king on the back of the elephant, a seat sometimes occupied by the Purohita (II, 374). An Uparâjan, however, did not necessarily act for the king during the latter's absence. Starting on a long hunting trip a king once entrusts the kingdom to the care of his mother (VI, 75). Another whimsical king who sets out on a long journey to discover his faults entrusts the realm to the ministers as a whole (IV, 370).

Every king had a Purohita, who was his adviser in spiritual, and sometimes also, in temporal affairs.

The very first king Mahâsammata had appointed a Brâhmana's son as family-priest (III, 454). Often, though not always, the office was hereditary and continued in the same family for generations (I, 437; II, 47; III, 392, 455; IV, 200). Once some Brâhmanas objected to the installation of a young son of the late Purohita. "For seven generations," protested the mother of the boy, "the performance of elephant consecration (hatthimaṅgala) has been hereditary in our family; the old custom will pass out of our hands and our wealth will disappear" (II, 47; III, 400). Sometimes, of course, new men would be introduced (III, 194, 337). A king of Videha has four sages to instruct him in Dhamma (VI, 330).

The Purohita is the Ācārya, teacher or preceptor (II, 376; IV, 270; V, 127). He is actually seen teaching sacred texts to a king of Benâres (III, 28). We see him admonishing

a king who was set on evil ways (III, 317). In the Tīlamuṭṭhi Jātaka, the king makes his Takkaṣilā teacher his Purohita, looks upon him as a father and follows his advice (II, 282). Sometimes the king and the Purohita are friends and companions (I, 289). A prince and a Purohita's son born on the same day are brought up together and go to Takkaṣilā together (III, 31). Fleeing at night from an invaded town, a king takes with him only his queen, a servant and the Purohita (III, 417). For his maintenance, the Purohita seems to have enjoyed, besides any presents, a Bhogaḡāma, the revenues of a village (III, 105; IV, 475). The consecration of state elephants brings a Purohita ten millions (II, 46). To the Purohita, as to priests in general, land may be given as sacrificial fee (III, 516).

The Purohita's functions were extremely varied. He is an astrologer and must ward off any misfortunes threatened by bad dreams or inexplicable natural phenomena (I, 334; II, 46; III, 43. Of. IV, 364). In the Maṅgala Jātaka, (I, 371), however, the premonition of signs is condemned.¹ In Dhonaśākha Jātaka (III, 159) an ambitious Purohita helps the king through a sacrificial ceremony, to acquire a city which is difficult to conquer. He proposes to his lord to pluck out the eyes of the thousand captured kings, to rip up their bellies, take out the entrails and give a bali-offering—to a god. Besides advising the king on all sorts of affairs, the Purohita often performed judicial work. Rectifying a wrong decision of the Senāpati who is supposed to be corrupt, a Purohita receives popular acclamations and is then appointed by the king regularly to try law-suits (II, 186-87). He guards the king's treasure (I, 439). His ambitions sometimes rise higher.

¹ The Tevijja Sutta (II, 3) contains an energetic denunciation of the arts and lying practices of astrology.

Once a Purohita tries to take the entire control of the state in his hands (V, 57). Sometimes he identifies his ambitions with the glory and greatness of his master. "I will make this king conquer all other kings in the whole of India ; in this way he will become the sole king and I the sole house-priest" (III, 159). If, however, a Purohita deeply displeased the king, he could be consigned to dire punishment. We see him once dragged to the place of execution by the king's people (I, 439). There is mention of corrupt back-biting priests (V, 2 et seq.). The judgments of another hopelessly corrupt priest were rectified by the prince who is then appointed judge of all suits and earns the bitter hostility of the priest (VI, 131). It goes without saying that, besides the house-priest, other Brâhmanas were consulted by the king. We hear of Brahmadata of Benâres and his queen calling 800 Brâhmanas to forecast their child's destiny (I, 272).

Besides the Purohita, the king had a number of ministers, amaccas. They seem to form a class by themselves and to regard themselves as distinct from Kṣatriyas and Brâhmanas and all others. "I come of amaccakula (a family of ministers)," says one (II, 98, 125). Failing to interpret a dream of the king once, the ministers say, "The Brâhmanas know it, O great king" (IV, 335 ; see also I, 260 ; III, 376 ; IV, 408 ; IV, 462 et seq.), thus implying that they themselves did not belong to the sacerdotal caste. Occasionally, however, Brâhmana ministers are met with (III, 342). Ministers should be versed in all sciences (II, 30, 74). As a rule they are respected by the king but there are occasional cases of arbitrary treatment (III, 239). The offices are sometimes hereditary (I, 248). On the death of a king the realm sometimes falls to their charge. During the occasional absence or incapacity of a king too the ministers sometimes took charge of the state (IV, 370, 407, 438).

The Senâpati seems to stand at the head of ministers. Having determined on renunciation, a king calls his ministers with the Senâpati at their head (V, 178). "The king cares nothing for the city," once the people say, "we will inform the Senâpati" (V, 459). Once the ministers offer the crown to the Senâpati but he declines it and departing for the forest, bequeaths a testament of laws to be followed in the administration of justice (V, 125). The Senâpati not only wielded the military command as his title implies, but also performed other functions. He decided cases. A corrupt Senâpati is seen accepting a bribe (II, 186). Sometimes a relation of the king, for instance, a step-brother, or a son, was appointed Senâpati (I, 133; IV, 168; VI, 30).

The regular minister of justice was the Vinicchâmacca who not merely decided cases but also offered Vinicchâmacca counsel on matters of law and morality (II, 380).

The Bhaṇḍâgârika or treasurer was an officer of the highest importance (IV, 43; V, 123; I, 248, 252). In the Nigrodha Jâtaka, some one predicts to his Bhaṇḍâgârika friends that on the next day one of them

would be king, another Senâpati and he himself Bhaṇḍâgârika. The Bhaṇḍâgârika seems usually to have been a very rich man and is sometimes spoken of as possessed of 80 crores (I, 349, 466, etc.). The Rajjuka or rajjugâhaka

The Rajjuka, amacca, 'the rope-holding minister,' seems etc. to have been the surveyor of land (IV, 169). Next to him stood another survey-officer called doṇamâpaka or doṇa, one who measured with a dry rod (II, 367, 378). The heraññika was the keeper of the king's purse (III, 193). The Sârathi was the charioteer (II, 377). The cashier, sword-bearer, keeper of the umbrella were some of the other officers (VI, 38 et seq.). The

Dovârîka is the chamberlain and belongs to the lowest rung of the ladder (II, 241 ; V, 250). In the *Mâtaṅga Jâtaka*, a dovârîka's duty is to thrash Caṇḍâlas and other vagabonds who wanted to peep at the palace, with sticks or bamboo-posts, catch them by the throat, and fling them on the ground (Fick, tr. Maitra, p. 156). In the *Mahâpiṅgala Jâtaka*, a dovârîka speaks of the king giving him eight blows on the head whenever he entered the palace (Fick, tr. Maitra, p. 156). The same title seems to have been borne by an officer whose duty was different. There is a dovârîka who has to close the city-gate at night (II, 379).

Some police officers are in evidence. The *nagara-guttika* is charged with the arrest and execution of robbers

and is once jokingly called 'king of the night' (III, 59). The *coraghâtaka*, 'slayer of thieves,' is another similar officer (III, 41, 179). The city, at any rate, has a large police force. Informed of the doings of a daring robber, the king of Benâres orders the city-watch to post bands here and there (III, 437). The police, however, was not altogether above corruption (III, 437 et seq.). Nor was it adequate for all contingencies. In crises the townsfolk would themselves come out and assist in the maintenance of order (V, 502).

Among the miscellaneous officers and employees at court may be mentioned the valuer of articles—of

Miscellaneous. elephants, horses, precious stones, gold, etc., who valued commodities to be pur-

chased at court (I, 124), archers (II, 87 ; V, 128), elephant-tamers (II, 221), musicians (I, 384 ; II, 250) ; dancers and singers (II, 227 ; IV, 324) ; potters, basket-makers, gardeners, barbers, cooks, etc. (I, 121, 137, 138 ; II, 5, 319 ; V, 290—92 ; Fick, tr. Maitra, 287—89). At least sometimes Government posts descended from father to son. A few *Jâtakas* (I, 349 ; III, 385 ; V, 383) imply that the post of

treasurer was hereditary in a family for seven or more generations. There is mention of an hereditary *senāpati* (V, 210). In any case many of the higher officers were drawn from the ranks of *Mahāmattas* or nobles (II, 98, 125, 203, 378).

The court of a king comprised the higher officers, the *Rājaññas* as well as other personages. Rich merchants

The court. called *Setthis*, whether heads of guilds or important on their own account, are frequently in attendance on the king (I, 289, 349; III, 119, 128, 299, 300, 444, 475; IV, 63; V, 382). There were courtiers who received grants of land from the king and were termed *Rājabhoggas*.

The *Jātaka* stories already alluded to make it clear that a kingdom was divided into provinces or districts.

The province. Princes were often appointed to govern them. Below this administrative division stood the village, then, as now, the unit of society.

The village. Village habitations were surrounded by fields and jungles (I, 215; V, 46). Some villages seem to have been fairly large. Physicians go to villages in search of medical practice (III, 202, 204). There is mention of a village which paid a revenue of 1,00,000 (III, 229), another which contained 1,000 smiths families (III, 281). In another village a *Brāhmaṇa* family worth eighty crores thought it worth their while to take up their abode. The kingdom of *Videha* is said to consist of 16,000 villages (III, 365). But our ignorance of the exact size and population of the territory makes it impossible to calculate the average extent of a village. The majority of villages are likely to have contained an heterogeneous population, but there were others inhabited exclusively or mainly by members of a single caste or followers of a single occupation. There is mention of *Brāhmaṇa* villages and *Brāhmaṇa* farmers (II, 368; III,

298; IV, 276); carpenters' villages (II, 18, 405; IV, 159, 208; Fick, tr. Maitra, p. 274); smiths' villages (III, 281, 86); potters' villages (III, 376, 508); hunters' villages (VI, 71); robbers' villages (II, 388; IV, 430).

In the Jâtakas there is no trace of any village Pañcâyata or any other organ of self-government. The only regular administrative officer was the Gâma-
Village gov-
ernment. bhojaka. The chief of the homogeneous

Brâhmaṇa and other villages (III, 281; VI, 71; IV, 430; II, 388) corresponded to the Gâma-bhojaka. The office was perhaps often hereditary, though village favour, opinion would naturally count for a great deal. The king's too, might partly determine the ultimate choice. Once the king's chaplain is seen acting as the village headman (III, 105). That the headman might sometimes be a person of high standing is also proved by the designation amacca which he sometimes bears (I, 354). In any case the functions of the Gâma-bhojaka were wide and important. He exercised judicial powers, arbitrated between villages and made the guilty pay fines. For instance, he fined a fisherman's wife for stirring up a quarrel. She was tied and beaten to make her pay the fine (I, 483). He imposed and collected fines for excessive drinking, etc., and granted licenses for the sale of intoxicants (I, 198). Or he might issue prohibitions against the slaughter of animals or sale of intoxicating drinks (IV, 115). Elsewhere he is seen distributing food to famine-stricken villagers on promise of receiving a share of their next crop (II, 135).

That he could be controlled by the king is clear. In the Kulāvaka Jâtaka (I, 198), the gâma-bhojaka speaks ill of the villagers to the king, but on their innocence being proved, the slanderer's possessions are given to them, he is made their slave and, finally, expelled from the village. In the Kharassara Jâtaka (I, 354) a gâma-bhojaka is degraded and

The king's control.

replaced by another. In the Pāṇiya Jātaka (IV, 14) two gāṃabhojakas in the kingdom of Kāśī respectively prohibit the sale of strong drink and slaughter of animals. But the people make a representation that these were time-honoured practices. The proclamations are annulled. Custom must be adhered to. The need for royal supervision could not be gainsaid. In I, 355, a gāṃabhojaka, newly appointed, betrays his trust by combining with robbers to plunder his charge (I, 355). If a headman was outrageous in his conduct, the villagers would sometimes take the law in their own hands. For instance, a headman who intrigued with a villager's wife was seized by the lock of hair on the top of his head, dragged into the courtyard and mocked as he cried 'I am the headman.' He was thrashed till he fainted. He was not deprived of his office but he remembered the lesson (II, 135-36).

There were many affairs in which the villagers themselves took the initiative. In the Losaka Jātaka (I, 287 et seq.), Buddhist brethren are supported by village personages, and villagers pay a man to teach them the true doctrine. We

are told that under the influence of a popular leader, villagers led ideal lives. "They used to get up early and sally forth, with razors and axes and clubs in their hands. With their clubs they used to roll out of the way all stones that lay on the four highways and other roads of the village; the trees that would strike against the axles of chariots, they cut down; rough places they made smooth; causeways they built, dug water tanks, and built a hall; they showed charity and kept the Commandments" (I, 199). Women sometimes took part in these activities (I, 201).

The number of cities in a kingdom was sometimes very large. "Eighty-four thousand cities," says a queen to console her melancholy husband, "chief of which is the royal city of Kuśāvati, own your

Cities.

sovereignty, sire, set your heart on them" (I, 392). In spite of the patent, gross exaggeration, the number indicates that there were many cities. As usual, men of the city looked down on the rural folk. "These misguided provincials," says the son of a slave, "have no idea of dressing. And as for taste in scents and garlands, they have got none" (I, 452). Cities were surrounded by walls and fortified by watch-towers, etc., and sought to be made impregnable (III, 117). Towns seem to be administered by royal officers. There is no trace of any institutions of urban self-government.

The land-revenue was the chief source of the king's income. Royal servants (*Rāja kammikā*) seem to have

Revenue.

measured the fields and fixed the assessment (IV, 169). There the owners of some fields pray for a remission of taxes. Exemption was occasionally obtained, as, for instance, once by a *Seṭṭhi* through the king's brother (IV, 169). *Raññobhāga* is the term applied to the king's share of the produce (II, 378). If taxes were not paid voluntarily, they were to be collected forcibly (II, 240; IV, 224; III, 9; V, 98). The taxes seem to have been collected by the *gāmabhōjakas* with the assistance of some royal officers. The latter are called *balipatigāhakas*, *niggāhakas*, *bali sādhakas* (II, 17). The collectors are sometimes very oppressive and once reduce a village to desolation. "The men could not, for fear of the king's people, live in their houses; they surrounded their houses with hedges and went after sunrise to the forest. In the day the king's people (*Rājapurusā*) plundered, at night the thieves" (V, 98). The property of those who died without heirs escheated to the king. Once (III, 299) we read that "seven days and seven nights the army of the king took to bring the goods of people dying without heirs to the palace." Sometimes whole families renounced the world and the king took possession of their property. In

the Haṭṭhipāla Jātaka (IV, 485) a Purohita and his wife follow their sons into the forest. On hearing of it, the king exclaims, "Unclaimed wealth comes to us." The rule about treasure-trove is not clear. On the one hand, a farmer appropriates the whole treasure he discovers in a field (I, 277). Elsewhere (I, 398) a king exclaims 'Treasure-trove is a royal perquisite' and so hastens to appropriate a woman—really an ogress. Petitioners make presents to the king (II, 166). Some other imposts are levied. The king is entitled to "milk money" on the birth of an heir (IV, 323).

It is patent that in the Jātaka administrative system as a whole, the executive and fiscal functions were combined with the judicial. But besides the king, the

Justice.

Purohita and the Senāpati there were also other judicial officers. Sometimes the bench consisted of several judges. We see a court of five counsellors (V, 228.) Incidentally, they are all corrupt (V, 229). In III, 505, a regular hall of justice is mentioned. Ecclesiastical cases seem to have come before state-courts. Thus, the case of a pregnant nun in which the commands of the Buddha and his rival Devadatta were concerned, comes before a king and his ministers (I, 146 et seq.). The investigation of crimes was, at least sometimes, thorough. When a king gives out that he has lost a jewelled crest, the city-gates are shut, all carts are searched and similar other measures taken (II, 122-23; V, 461). The punishments for serious offences were very severe. A robber, guilty of high treason, has his hands and feet, nose and ears cut off, is laid in a canoe and is left to drift down the Ganges (II, 117). Another daring robber is sentenced by the king to be put to death. "They bound his hands behind his back, and led him to the place of execution, scourging him in every square with whips" (III, 436; see also V, 461). An ascetic suspected of robbery at night is, after being reviled and beaten by the owners of the house, carried into the presence of the king. The latter

makes no inquiry but merely says, "Off with him, impale him upon a stake." They took him to the cemetery and lifted him up on a stake of acacia wood. There he hung a whole day with gouts of blood falling upon his body (IV, 29). An ascetic, at first appointed judge, is falsely accused of treason and is sentenced to be slain. However, he is ultimately allowed to depart. Later, the queen is accused of correspondence with him and is put to death. When the four princes become enemies of the king on this account and the innocence of the ascetic is established, the king sentences his five accusers—the former judges—to be put to death. The sentence, however, is not executed in deference to the wishes of the Bodhisatta. So, the five men are stripped of their property, disgraced in various ways by their hair being fastened into five locks, by being put into fetters and chains, by cowdung being sprinkled over them and are finally driven out of the kingdom (V, 229 et seq.). In another story, two sellers of bad drink are sentenced to be beheaded (V, 13). Accidental homicide, however, seems to have been lightly dealt with. A park-keeper who happens to kill a pacceka-buddha flies in dread but is pardoned and restored to his office (III, 441). For certain offences imprisonment was the ordinary punishment. Prison life was hard indeed. On release a man looked forlorn and helpless (VI, 8). Imprisonment, in fact, seems to have been regarded as equal to some horrible punishments in its severity. Thus, of four robbers brought before a king, one is sentenced "to receive a thousand strokes from whips barbed with thorns, another to be imprisoned in chains, a third to be smitten with a spear and the fourth to be impaled" (VI, 4). For some heinous crimes the punishment was to be trampled down by elephants. The culprits were made to lie down in a courtyard and the trained beasts broke their bones (I, 200).

The Jâtakas throw little light on the military side of the administration. The army seems to have been recruited for the most part from the natives of a

The Army. state. A king who slights his own soldiers and favours new-comers finds his troops torn by jealousies at a crisis and suffers defeat. He learns the lesson and once again shows favour to his own men (III, 400 et seq.).

The political conditions reflected in the Jâtakas display the same feudal tendencies and the same tenure of foreign relationships as the Epics. The size of a state was, as usual, small but the ever-present tendency towards expansion led

Foreign af-
fairs. to complications. A king would sometimes attack another without any provocation (II, 95). They raid each other's frontier (I, 263 et seq.). Another king finds his city surrounded by numerous potentates because astrologers have predicted universal dominion for his daughter's son. He has to fly to the forest (IV, 230). We are told of a single sovereign capturing a thousand "kings" and seeking to make a sacrifice of them (III, 159 et seq.). Elsewhere we hear of ten brothers slaying on the wheel thousands and thousands of conquered 'kings' (IV, 84). The passion for war is well caricatured in the Cullakaliṅga Jâtaka. A king of Dantapur in Kaliṅga, gifted with enormous personal strength and commanding a fine army, could find none willing to fight him. "I am longing to fight," said he to his ministers, "but can find no one to war with me." On the suggestion of the ministers he sends his four daughters, bedecked with jewels, round about so as to be able to declare war on potentates who might be tempted to take any one of the damsels into their harem (III, 3 et seq.). Victory in war did sometimes lead to annexation. Thus, the king of Kâśi conquers, annexes and plunders Kôśala (III, 116, 153; V, 425). We read of another king

whose territory is annexed and who himself is captured and suspended head downwards on the lintel of the door (III, 13). But sometimes the defeated rulers were suffered to retain their dominions on acknowledgment of suzerainty.

Feudal ten-
dencies.

So arose a network of relationships of overlordship and vassalage. Thus, many "kings" send their daughters to be married to the prince of Kuśavati, and their sons to serve as his pages (V, 282 et seq.). Another element of feudalism was furnished by the presence of big landholders (III, 155; IV, 220). A Brāhmaṇa magnate was worth 80 crores (IV, 237). Another frontier landowner was estimated equally highly (IV, 370).

These feudal tendencies and this tenure of foreign relations rendered the frontier a scene of chronic disorder and confusion. It harboured rebels and conspirators (VI, 31). It was often in a state of revolt or disturbance which called the king from his capital (I, 304, 437; II, 74, 315; III, 400, 497; IV, 189). The departure of the king to set the frontier in order was sometimes the signal for internal trouble.

Besides feudalism there was the tendency towards functional organisation. Traders in various articles, skilled

Guilds.

workers of various categories, such as mariners (IV, 137); garland-makers (III, 405); caravan traders (I, 368; II, 295); mass-troopers (I, 296-97; II, 388; IV, 430); masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, painters, etc. (III, 387; VI, 427), had organised themselves into guilds. Eighteen was the traditional number of the varieties of guilds. Their representatives were invited to ceremonial functions (IV, 411; VI, 22). Definite quarters were sometimes assigned to guilds in a city (I, 320). The state maintained touch with the guilds. Their leaders are seen attending on the king (II, 12, 52; III, 281). The Bhaṇḍāgārika seems to have acted as a judge for

guilds in some cases (IV, 43). Within a guild itself, the position of the Setṭhi or alderman seems often to be hereditary (I, 231, 248; III, 475).

CHAPTER VII.

Pre-Mauryan Administrations.

Vedic literature, the Sûtras, the Epics and the Jâtakas give an inkling into the administrative practices of different regions and ages but they afford little help towards the reconstruction of regular political history. It is not until the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. that any connected account of political events can be commenced and administrative data examined in the light of well-authenticated institutions. Nevertheless, a few facts can be gleaned about the political transactions of the two centuries which preceded the foundation of the Mauryan empire. The most important sources of information are the Buddhist and Jaina¹ literatures which, though primarily ethical and philosophical, incidentally give some political facts because the founders of Buddhism and Jainism sprang from aristocratic families and came into contact with crowned heads in their career. In several Buddhist works occurs the following list of the sixteen great states :—

(1) Aṅgā, (2) Magadhā, (3) Kāśī, (4) Kośalā, (5) Vajjī, (6) Mallā, (7) Cetī, (8) Vamsā, (9) Kurū, (10) Pañcālā, (11) Macchā, (12) Sūrasenā, (13) Assakā, (14) Avantī, (15) Gandhārā and (16) Kambojā.²

¹ See Jacobi, S. B. E., Vol. XLV, p. 122, for Pārśvanātha who might have been the founder of Jainism. For the life and teachings of Mahāvīra, the traditional twenty-fourth or last Tīrthakara of the Jains, see the Jaina Kalpa Sūtra and Ācārāṅga Sūtra.

² Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, p. 23; Cambridge History of India, I, 172-73; relying mainly on Aṅguttara Nikāya, I, 213; IV, 252, 256, 260. Mahāvastu, II, 2. Vinaya Texts, II, 146. The names are given in their Pāli forms.

It is likely that about the sixth century B.C. the whole of North India from Gandhâra in modern Afghânistân to the borders of Bengal was parcelled out into

Big States.

roughly among sixteen principal states. Another list in the Dîgha Nikâya divides the central region of the North into seven states.¹ But neither the seven nor the sixteen seem to have constituted a permanent political system. They frequently warred with their neighbours; their boundaries would change and some would be annexed to others. By the beginning of the fifth century B.C. Kôśala had conquered Kâśī, Magadha had conquered Âṅga and the Assakas were probably dependent on Avantī.² Besides the principal states there were others, dependent or independent, which filled the northern plains. Some of these were clan-oligarchies in their form of government.³ A list of ten such clans was compiled by Rhys Davids from Pâli records:—

Clan-oligarchies.

1. The Sâkiyas, capital Kapilavatthu
2. The Bulis, capital Allakappa
3. The Bhaggas, capital on Sumsumâra Hill
4. The Koliyas, capital Râmagâma
5. The Kâlânas, capital Kesaputta
6. The Mallas, capital Pāvā
7. The Mallas, capital Kusinârā
8. The Moriyas, capital Pipphalivana
9. The Videhas, capital Mithilā
10. The Licchavis, capital Vesālī.⁴

¹ Dîgha Nikâya, II, 235; Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 270. Cambridge History of India, I, p. 173.

² Rhys Davids, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 173.

³ The Avadâna Sataka (No. 88) preserves an old tradition that some merchants from Madhyadeśa in reply to queries in the south, stated that some regions were under Gaṇas and some under Râjas. Kâtyâyana, IV, 168, also distinguishes between saṃgha and Ekarâja. See D. R. Bhandarkar, *Lectures on the Ancient History of India*, p. 147.

⁴ Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 8, 9, 22. Cambridge History of India, I, p. 175. Also, *Jaina Kalpa Sûtra*, ed. Jacobi, p. 65.

All these clans were not necessarily independent. For instance, the Śākiyas owned the suzerainty of Kośala and, before the death of the Buddha, suffered a complete destruction of their autonomy.¹ Thus, the fundamental political conditions in this epoch are the same as those reflected in somewhat later literature which has already been noticed. It is, however, interesting that autonomy, so long as it lasted, carried with it autonomy of political organization. A monarch might be the suzerain of an oligarchy.

The Jaina Ācārāṅga Sūtra preserves the old tradition that some regions were ruled by Gaṇas, some by two kings and so on while others had no rulers at all.² It is difficult to be sure of the meaning of this passage.³ Neither Buddhist nor Jaina literature furnishes any instance of dual kingship. If the rule of Gaṇas pertains to these states, it probably means the rule of clans. All the oligarchies are named after clans and founded on the idea of clan. Their assemblies are referred to as those of the Śākiyas, Mallas, etc.⁴ All the inhabitants of any one of these states could hardly have belonged to a single clan and could not have come together for deliberation. Of representation, there is no trace or hint anywhere. Hence this type of polity is to be designated as oligarchy rather than republic. The Jātakas mention seven thousand seven hundred and seven Licchavi kings. The number is too symmetrical to be authentic but it does indicate that the aristocratic families

¹ Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 8.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra, II, 3, 1, 10.

³ For a doubtful interpretation, Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, I, 96-100.

⁴ Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 113. *Dīgha Nikāya* II, 147.

numbered several thousands. Beyond their pale lay the other inhabitants.¹

In these oligarchies the assembly seems to have been a living institution. Probably it was a continuation of the

The Assembly
hall. Vedic Sabhâ or Samiti. The Samthâgâra,
as the mote-hall was called, seems to

have been a mere roof supported by pillars without walls. Like the Vedic Sabhâ it was the scene of gossip and social life. A Brâhmaṇa thus describes his experiences of Śâkiya Samthâgâra to the Buddha, "Once, Gautama, I had to go to Kapilavatthu on some business or other of Pokkharasadis and went into the Śâkiyans' Congress Hall. Now at that time there were a number of Śâkiyans, old and young, seated in the hall on grand seats, making merry and joking together, nudging one another with their fingers; and on a truth, methinks, it was I myself who was the subject of their jokes; and not one of them offered me a seat. That, Gautama, is neither fitting nor is it seemly that the Śâkiyans, menials as they are, mere menials, neither venerate, nor value, nor esteem, nor give gifts, nor pay honour to Brâhmaṇas."² The news of the Buddha's death is broken to the Mallas while they are in the assembly hall.³ Elsewhere too there is a reference to the mote-hall of the Mallas.⁴

It is almost impossible to form an idea of the powers or procedure of the assembly. It is recorded that when the king of Kôśala besieged the capital of the Śâkiyas and demanded surrender, they resolved to assemble and deliberate whether they should open the gates. When they

¹ Jâtaka, I, 504; IV, 148.

² Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I, 113.

³ Mahâparinibbâna Suttanta, 6, 23.

⁴ Dîgha Nikâya, II, 147.

assembled they discovered that opinion was divided. But the view of the majority prevailed.¹ We are not told whether it was an *ad hoc* gathering or a regular meeting of the assembly. The Aṭṭhakathā has it that the tocsin was sounded when the Vaisālîans entered the house of law, which may mean the assembly.² If the Mahā-Govinda Suttanta faithfully reproduces earthly conditions in its description of the palaver in Sakka's heaven, it may be inferred that at a clan meeting all sat in a specified order, that the chief laid the business before the assembly and that the recorders noted down the unanimous decisions arrived at.³ It is not, however, possible to assert anything with certainty about procedure at clan meetings. Jayaswal and, following him, some other scholars hold that the detailed procedure of business prescribed by the Buddha for his Saṅgha or monastic order was borrowed by him from political assemblies where it actually prevailed and where, in fact, it was taken for granted. But apart from the fact that the dates of Buddhist works are very uncertain, it has to be noted that nowhere in Buddhist or Jaina literature is there any evidence of any organic connection between the procedure of the monastic order and the political assembly. In the Cullavagga the Buddha is represented as laying down the law himself for monks and nuns. There is little warrant for assuming that the theory of the monastic order represents the practice of political life.⁴

¹ Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 118-19.

² Turnour, J. A. S. B., VII, 1838, pp. 994-95.

³ Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 259-64; Cambridge History of India, I, p. 176.

⁴ The Vinaya Piṭaka is the primary authority for the Buddhist Saṅgha. For the procedure of monastic meetings Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta, IV, 7; Mahāvagga, II; III, 6, 6, 26; IX, 2-8; Cullavagga, IV, 10, 14, 26; XII, 2, 7-8; V, 14, 24; IV, 11, 12; XI, 1, 4, 7; IV, 9, 5; XII, 1, 10. For Jayaswal's views, Modern Review, 1913; Hindu Polity, I, pp. 45 et seq. Also, D. R. Bhandarkar, Carmichael Lectures, 1918, Lecture IV.

In these oligarchies the executive was presided over by a chief called Rājan. There is nothing to show how he was elected or that he was elected at all in the strict sense of the term. The designation Rājan applied to him has monarchical associations. The accounts of the life of the Buddha seem to assume that he might have succeeded his father Śuddhodana in the headship of the Śākiya clan. A passage, though late, in Kātyāyana's Kāśikā is illuminating on this point. It speaks of "Rājanyas being leaders of families consecrated to leadership."¹ The chief point of difference between the oligarchic and monarchical executive seems to be that the former was based partly on the idea of clan and had to take account of the assembly. For the rest, the line between the two is very faint, almost non-existent. Besides the Rāja there was an Uparāja, a sort of vicegerent and a senāpati or military commander.² Other officers, too, might have been appointed. The Mahāvastu speaks of the Licchavis appointing a Mahattaka to be the envoy of the whole people.³ Mention is made of peons or police among the Koliyans and Mallas.⁴ If a passage in a later work, the Lalitavistara, can be relied on, the clan-executive sometimes found it difficult to carry out its will. "Amongst them (the Vaisālīans) the rule of having respect for the high, the middle ones, the oldest, the elders, is not observed; everyone considers himself to be the Rāja; 'I am the Rāja, I am the Rāja.' No one becomes a follower of another."⁵

¹ Kāśikā, 546-47.

² Aṭṭhakathā, Turnour, J. A. S. B., VII, 1833, pp. 993 et seq.

³ Mahāvastu, I, 254.

⁴ Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, p. 21.

⁵ Lalitavistara, III. Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, I, 52, takes the passage to imply equal right of voting and a universal aspiration for the presidentship.

Besides the organs of government at the centre, there were moots in towns and perhaps also in villages,¹ but of their jurisdiction or working we can gather nothing. Kulas or families also had some regulating powers.² Here the state is based partly on the territorial basis and partly on the basis of kinship. From incidental touches it appears that the whole government was rather homely in character. Thus, the Mallas of Kusinârâ imposed a fine of 500 pieces on any one who "went not forth to meet the Blessed One (the Buddha," when, on his tour, he drew near their town."³

According to the Aṭṭhakathâ, the judiciary consisted of a graded series of courts, each of which must find the accused guilty before he could be punished. The Viniccaya Mahâmattas formed the first court. Then came the Vohârikas or lawyer-judges; Sâtradhara or masters of law; Aṣṭakula or council of the eight; Senâpati, Uparâja and Râja.⁴ The passage is intensely interesting but it is not corroborated anywhere else in Buddhist literature. The arrangements it indicates are rather complicated and there is no means of knowing how they worked in practice. The Aṭṭhakathâ adds that the decisions of the Râja were recorded in a Pavani-patthakân.

The clans sometimes formed alliances and even loose temporary confederations. The Licchavis once federated with the Mallas and, together, both set up an executive of eighteen members, drawn in equal numbers from either group.⁵ Elsewhere we read that when Ajâtasatru attacked his grand-

¹ Rhys Davids, *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 177.

² Later, the Basâdh seals (*Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind.*, 1903-4, pp. 107 ff; *Ibid.*, 1911-12, p. 56; *Ibid.*, 1913-14, p. 138) speak of prathama kulikas or chiefs of kulas.

³ Vinaya, I, 247; Mahâvâgga, VI, 36.

⁴ Aṭṭhakathâ, Turnour, *J. A. S. B.*, VII, 1838, pp. 993-94.

⁵ Jaina Kalpa Sûtra, 128.

father's dominion of Vesālī, he was encountered by nine Licchavi and nine Malla confederate chiefs, though in vain.¹ At another time the Licchavis federated with the Videhas and other clans. The confederates as a whole were called Saṃvajjians. It was to the federated Vajjian clans that Gautama Buddha addressed a few precepts. He seems to give a dose of conservatism to those who might be inclined to rush headlong into innovations. He insists that time-honoured customs and usages must be maintained. Nothing that was not already established should be enacted. Nothing that had been enacted should be abrogated. The elders must be honoured, esteemed, revered and supported. It should be a point of duty to hearken to their words. Justice and fairness should always be followed. Women or girls should never be detained by force or abducted. The spiritual interests should not be neglected. The Arhantas should be defended, protected and supported. The Caityas, sacred temples, must be revered and maintained. Turning to constitutional affairs, the Buddha wanted the clansmen to hold full and frequent assemblies. They should "meet together in concord and rise in concord and carry out Vajjian business in concord." So long as these wholesome rules were observed, "so long may the Vajjians be expected not to decline but to prosper."²

The clan-oligarchies covered a very small part of the northern fringe. The plains for the most part were ruled by monarchs. One of the most powerful kingdoms in the time of the Buddha was that of Kośāla which stretched from Nepāl to Prayāga on the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna. It does not

¹ S. B. E., XXII, Int., p. XIV.

² *Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta*, tr. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 79-85. The Buddha repeats the same precepts in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, VII, 19.

seem to have been a unitary state. The Śākyaas are mentioned as a feudatory community acknowledging the overlordship of king Pasenadi.¹ The relations of the Śākyaas with the Kośala king are well indicated in a passage in the Dialogues of the Buddha, where the great teacher remarks that "the respect which Pasenadi receives from the Śākyaas is shown by him towards me."² None the less, the Śākyaas retained their pride of birth and disdained to give a daughter of their house to the suzerain's family.³ Elsewhere Pasenadi is said to be the head of a group of five Rājas.⁴ Here is an unmistakable indication of feudalism. Pasenadi is said to have been educated at Takkaśilā. He appreciated the teachings of the Buddha and built a Saddhamma Mahāśālā, a great hall of the Dhamma, for him. None the less he practised perfect religious toleration.⁵ There is an interesting Jātaka tradition (IV, 152) that once during his absence from the capital to visit the Buddha, Pasenadi left the administration in charge of a minister who proclaimed his deposition and installed his son, Viḍudābha, on the throne.

Kośala was sometimes at war and sometimes at peace with neighbouring realm of Magadha, one of the sixteen

Magadha. Janapadas of Jambūdvīpa.⁶ Its king

Bimbisāra or Śreṇika who was a contemporary of the Buddha is said to have been the fifth of the

¹ Rhys Davids, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 181.

² *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 83-84. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, III, 80.

³ Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, 75-77.

⁴ *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, Book of the Kindred Sayings, tr. Mrs. Rhys Davids, p. 106.

⁵ Kośala Saṃyutta, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, I, 68-102. *Dīgha Nikāya*, 87; *Udānavarga*, 2, 6.

⁶ For Janapada or Mahājanapada, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 213; IV 252, 256, 260. The name Magadha first appears in the *Atharvaveda*, V, 22, 14.

Śaiśunāga dynasty founded by Śiśunāga or Śiśunāka about the middle of the 7th century B.C.¹ His kingdom is said to have included 80,000 villages, each under a chief or headman.² The Cullavagga records an incident pertaining to Bimbisāra's administration, and showing that the king had a number of Mahāmattas or ministers who were expected to give him sound advice. Bimbisāra dismissed some Mahāmattas who had advised him badly, degraded some others with whose counsel he was not satisfied and promoted those whose advice he approved of.³ An incident relating to the reign of Ajātasatru, son of Bimbisāra, shows that the state reserved forests even in those early days. A Bhikṣu's action in taking wood from a reserved forest is noticed by Vassakāra, a minister of Ajātasatru, and brought to the knowledge of the Buddha.⁴ The Vinaya Piṭaka shows that towns had gates which were closed at night when all entry was forbidden.⁵ Both Bimbisāra or Śreṇika and Ajātasatru or Kūṇika are claimed by Jainas and Buddhists as adherents of their religions. Probably they patronised both the creeds and displayed that wide tolerance and appreciation of divergent persuasions which characterised so many rulers in ancient India. It is possible to form some idea of the tenure of inter-state relationships in the Buddha's days. Bimbisāra is said to have contracted marriage alliances with the kings of several states. These, we may be sure, were quite common in ancient India. It is said that on Kośala Devi, one of the wives of Bimbisāra, the revenues of an estate in Kāśī had been settled by her father

¹ V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition, p. 82.

² Mahāvagga, V, I, 1. For Bimbisāra tradition, see also the *Jaina Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*, I, 148-49.

³ Cullavagga, VII, 3, 5. For ministers see also Mahāvagga, I, 40, 3.

⁴ Vinaya Piṭaka, III, 41-45.

⁵ Vinaya Piṭaka, IV, 116-17.

Mahākośala. When the lady died of grief at the tragic end, of her husband, the payment was no longer made to Magadha. Thereupon, Ajātaśatru commenced a war which, with varying fortune, was closed with a marriage alliance.¹ The diplomatic relations of states already extended over nearly the whole of India. Ajātaśatru is said to have fortified his capital Rājagṛiha against an apprehended attack from Ujjayini.² Ajātaśatru actually came into conflict with the Vajjian confederacy. He is represented as saying, "I will root out these Vajjians, mighty and powerful though they be, I will destroy these Vajjians, I will bring these Vajjians to utter ruin." He built a fort at Pāṭaliputra (Pāṭaliputta) on the Ganges on the frontier, treacherously sowed dissensions among the Vajjians, at last overran their territory, destroyed Vesālī and butchered its people.³

Of the other contemporary kingdoms, those of Avantī
 Other Kingdoms. with its capital at Ujjayini and of the
 Vaiśyas with its capital at Kosambi are

¹ Dīgha Nikāya, I, 86; III, 127; Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, I, XII–XV; Dīpavāṇśa, III, 56–60; Mahāvāṇśa, II, 29, 30; Rhys Davids, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 182–85; Charpentier, *Ibid.*, 160–61; V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 32–33.

² Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 13. Archaeological remains prove that Rājagṛiha was a great town in antiquity. The remains of its viḥāras and stūpas have in modern times been utilised for temples, mosques and tombs.

³ Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II, 78; *Cambridge History of India*, I, 184–85; Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha*, 127; V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 37–38.

Jayaswal (J. B. O. R. S., V, 550–51) identifies the Parkham statue of Mathurā as that of Ajātaśatru and the two Śaśunāka statues in the Indian Museum at Calcutta as those of Udaya and Nandivardhana of this line (J. B. O. R. S., V, 402–406). See also his paper on the Śaśunāka and Maurya chronology and the date of the Buddha's Nirvāṇa, J. B. O. R. S., I, p. 67. For criticism, Ramaprasad Chanda, *Ind. Ant.*, XLVIII, p. 25; R. C. Majumdar, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

noteworthy but we know nothing of administrative importance about them. If Buddhist tradition preserved in later works can be trusted, justice was highly prized at Kāśī.¹

It was probably during the lifetime of the Buddha that the Persians under Darius conquered certain districts in the north-west of India and grouped them into the twentieth satrapy of their empire.²

The Persian Dominion. It stretched along the banks of the Indus and probably included the whole of Sindh and part of the Punjab to the east of the river. It paid 360 Euboic talents of gold dust, equal to 185 hundredweights as tribute.³ But a passage in Xenophon's *Life of Cyrus* shows that partly at least the Persian dominion fell into line with the fundamental political conditions of India. There is a reference to an Indian 'king' who sent a sum of money through some agents to the Persian king.⁴ The passage points not to downright annexation but to the relationship of suzerainty and vassalage. The Persian empire always respected local autonomy and it is more than probable that its Indian tracts

¹ Dhammapada Commentary, I, 251 et seq. For the kingdoms, Majjhima Nikāya, III, 7; II, 83; Vinaya, II, 32, 139; Lalitavistara, ed. Rajendra Lal Mitra, p. 24; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 141-46; Cambridge History of India, I, 185-88. The site of Kosambi long discussed (e.g., Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, I, 366-69; V. A. Smith, *J. R. A. S.*, 1898, p. 503) was identified last year with the village of Kosam, at a distance of about eighteen miles from Sirathu Railway Station in the district of Allahabad.

² India is not mentioned in the Behistun Inscriptions of 516 B.C. at Persepolis but is mentioned in the Inscription on the tomb of Darius at Naksh-i-Rustam, 486 B.C. The Indian satrapy must have come into existence during this interval.

³ Herodotus (Rawlinson), II, p. 403; IV, 177, 207; V. A. Smith, *op cit.*, 38-43; William Jackson, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 319-341; who may be consulted for further references to other writers.

⁴ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, VI, 2, 1-11.

were either left in the hands of old dynasties or at any rate governed on the old lines. About Indian royal houses themselves it is interesting to recall that Aristotle quotes from a book by Scylax of Caryanda (employed by Darius to navigate the Indus) that among Indians kings were held to be of a race superior to their subjects.¹ Here a ruling caste is indicated. The Persian connection probably provided fresh openings for an exchange of cultural influences between India and Persia. The general similarity between the political institutions of ancient India and ancient Persia makes it difficult to estimate the extent of the influence of the latter on the former but that there was some influence cannot be doubted.²

During the interval between the death of the Buddha and the invasion of Alexander the Great in 327 B.C., Indian political annals, even after the painstaking research of the last two generations, can show only a few names.³ Practically nothing can be gleaned about administrative practices. It is only in the later years of the 4th century B.C. that the curtain rises with advent of the Greeks. There were at least nineteen writers who visited the country with Alexander or shortly after his death or who were at any rate his contemporaries. Patrokles states that Alexander caused the whole country to be described by men well-acquainted with it and that the description was put into his hands afterwards by his treasurer Xenokles.⁴ But all the

The Greek accounts.

¹ Politics, VII, 14.

² Spooner, J. R. A. S., 1915, pp. 63-89, 405-55, exaggerates the general influence of Persia on India. For criticism, V. A. Smith, J. R. A. S., 1915, pp. 800-802; Keith, *Ibid.*, 1916, pp. 138-43; Thomas, *Ibid.*, pp. 362-66; Nimrod, *Modern Review*, 1916. See also J. J. Modi, *Asiatic Papers*, II. For a comparison of Indian and Persian political institutions, *infra*, Ch. XVII, Conclusion.

³ V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 38-43. Rhys Davids, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 188-90. Jayaswal, J. B. O. R. S., V, 88-106. R. D. Banerji, *Ibid.*, 210-15.

⁴ Strabo, IV. McCrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 95.

original works have perished. The extracts probably embellished by successive generations of writers and preserved in a few authors mostly of the first century B.C., or the first century A.D., sometimes indulge in fairy tales and sometimes contradict one another. Strabo stigmatised the Greek writers on India as a set of liars of whom only a few managed now and then to stammer out some words of truth. The charge is sweeping and rather uncritical but it must be admitted that it is difficult to penetrate to the truth in writers who had a love for the marvellous and who borrow or summarise accounts of regions and times far removed from their own. They cannot be accepted at their face value and have always to be used with great caution.¹

¹ Of the writers, Arrian (Arrianus), philosopher, statesman, historian and tactician, was born towards the close of the first century A.D. at Nikomedia in Bithynia in Asia Minor and died in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Strabo flourished in the reigns of the Emperors Augustus and Tiberius (27 B.C.—A.D. 37) in Pontos, and wrote a sort of universal geography. Diodorus Siculus, born at Agyrium in Sicily, flourished in the days of Julius Cæsar and Augustus (49 B.C.—A.D. 14) and composed the *Bibliotheca Historia*, a Universal History. Quintus Curtius Rufus lived probably in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 70–79). He wrote a life of Alexander Plutarch, the famous author of the *Parallel Lives* of Greek and Roman heroes, was born at Chaironæa in Boiotia about the middle of the first century A.D. Pliny (A.D. 23–79) wrote the *Enyclopædic Historia Naturalis*. Claudius Ptolemaeus (Ptolemy) wrote his *Outline of Geography* (*Geographike Hyphegesis*) in the nature of a universal survey, at Alexandria. For English rendering, McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Calcutta, 1877. *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, Westminster, 1901; *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as described by Arrian*, Q. Curtius Rufus, Diodorus, Plutarch and Justin. Westminster, 1896. For Modern accounts of Alexander's Invasion of India, see V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition, pp. 52–120; E. R. Bevan, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 345–386.

On the whole, the Greek accounts show the country between the Indus and the Jumná divided into a large number of independent and half-independent principalities, frequently at war with their neighbours and all swayed by militarism. The eastern parts of the country seem to have developed the large-state organisation, which, however, was equally militaristic. Of the states in the Puñjáb and Sindh some were monarchical and others tribal oligarchies. Ámbhi of Taxilá who allied himself with Alexander, Puru or Porus who offered such tenacious resistance and the neighbouring king of Abhisára, are monarchs of the usual type already considered.¹ It appears that there were many chiefs under a king. At a sort of durbar held by Alexander at Takṣaśilá, before he met Porus, a number of chiefs came to him with presents from the small territory already subdued. The oligarchies² display variety of organisation but it is impossible not to suspect that their institutions have been brought by the Greek imagination nearer to those of Hellas. For instance, we are told of the Sophytes (Saubhūtis)³ and the Kathians (Kaṭhas) that "they do not acknowledge and rear children according to the will of parents but as the officers entrusted with the medical inspection of infants may direct, for if they have remarked anything deformed or defective in the limbs of

¹ Puru seems to have been a family name. At the time of Alexander's invasion, a nephew of the king who is given the same name, was in revolt against him and offered to surrender his uncle into the hands of Alexander. Later, when he found the king an ally of the Greeks, he warred against both (Arrian, Book V, Ch. XXI; McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, 113-14).

² Pāpini who cannot be later than 300 B.C. mentions Saṅghas in his Sūtras (e.g., III, 3, 42) but we cannot be sure that he is referring to oligarchies or republics. For an interpretation in the political sense see Jaysawal, *Hindu Polity*, I, 41-44.

³ For the identification of Sophytes with Saubhūtis, Sylvain Lévi, *Journal Asiatique*, VIII, pp. 237 et seq.

the child they order it to be killed."¹ This order, adds Strabo, was pronounced by a magistrate according to the law.² Diodorus embellishes the details and adds that beauty was highly prized by those people in politics as in marriage.³ Political infanticide is opposed to all we know of Hindu life, character and institutions in any part of the country from indigenous or foreign sources. Nowhere in Hindu literature or inscriptions is there the remotest hint at it whether by way of approval or disapproval. If such a practice really prevailed at this time, Asoka who came shortly after and who was a humanitarian above all else would be sure to condemn it in his edicts. The fact is that the Greeks, struck by the heroism and endurance of the Kāṭhas naturally compared them to Spartans and then imagined that similar institutions were required to produce similar characteristics. Another stretch of fancy can be detected in the description of Patala by Diodorus. It was a city of great note "with a political constitution drawn on the same lines as the Spartan; for in this community the command in war is vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses while a council of elders rules the whole state with paramount authority."⁴ Here, again, the Greek imagination seems to have transplanted the Spartan constitution to the banks of the Indus. Patala was perhaps really an oligarchy and its people were undoubtedly valorous. But it is not necessary to fancy with the Greeks that the highest valour could only be produced by Spartan political habits. The tribe ruled by Mausikanos (Mucukarpa) are said to have taken their meals in common and not to have recognised slavery.⁵ The latter statement is likely to be true, but the former is again too reminiscent of Sparta. One

¹ Curtius, *McCrindle, Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 219.

² Strabo, XV, 30.

³ Diodorus, XVII, 91; *McCrindle, Invasion*, p. 280.

⁴ Diodorus, XVII, 104.

⁵ Strabo, XV, 34.

administrative detail about this tribe is more than interesting. Strabo says that their courts took cognisance only of murder and other violent crime.¹ It is possible that criminal justice had been taken over by the state but that civil disputes were still disposed of by heads of families or clans. Reminiscences of Athenian history seem to sway the imagination of the Greek writers when they relate that "at last after many generations had come and gone, the sovereignty, it is said, was dissolved and democratic governments were set up in the cities,"² or that "most of the cities adopted the democratic form of government, though some retained the kingly, until the invasion of the country by Alexander."³ It is noticeable that the Greeks think and write in terms of the city-state about India which was predominantly a land of villages and country states. In all Greek accounts of India this tendency to bring Indian history and politics into line with their own political evolution has to be allowed for. Arrian has it that beyond the Hyphasis (the Beâs), the country was exceedingly fertile and the inhabitants were good agriculturists, brave in war, and living under an excellent system of internal government; "for the multitude was governed by the aristocracy, who exercised their authority with justice and moderation."⁴ Strabo adds that, according to the earlier writers, this aristocracy consisted of "five thousand councillors each of whom furnished the state with an elephant."⁵ It has been suggested that this unnamed state was that of the Yaudheyas whose coins have been found in that region in large numbers.⁶ In any

¹ Ibid., XV, 34, 54.

² Diodorus, III, 38; McOrindle, Megasthenes, etc., p. 38.

³ Diodorus, III, 39; McOrindle, op. cit., p. 40.

⁴ Arrian, Book V, 25; McOrindle, Invasion of India, p. 121.

⁵ Strabo, XV, 37; McOrindle, Ancient India as described in Classical Literature, p. 45.

⁶ Jayaswal, Hindu Polity, I, 67.

case, the state was a military aristocracy, probably a tribal oligarchy, which comprised some thousands of heads of families. According to Curtius, the Sambastai or Abastanoi (the Ambasthas) had a democratic form of government; they elected their generals, renowned for their valour and military skill; their army consisted of 60,000 foot, 6,000 cavalry, and 500 chariots. Diodorus adds that having 'adopted the advice of their elders not to fight,' they sent an embassy to Alexander for peace.¹ According to the Greeks the Nysaeans also had an oligarchical form of government. Alexander desired them to send the best hundred men of their governing body to be sent with him. The conversations which followed on this demand betray, on the part of Indians, a familiarity with Greek tradition, Alexander's history and foundation of cities,² which is likely to be an effort of the Greek imagination. The only safe conclusion to be drawn from the interesting notice is that the Nysaeans had a ruling class and that Alexander demanded 100 members thereof as hostages for their good faith. The Apsinae or Agalassians (Agraśrenī ?), in the neighbourhood of the Oxydrakai (Kṣādrakas) had, according to Diodorus, an army of 40,000 foot and 3,000 horse. Their territory comprised large cities which offered house-to-house resistance to the Macedonians.³ The Sabarcae are said to have enjoyed a democratic form of government and to have mustered 60,000 foot, and 6,000 cavalry and 500 chariots, commanded by three generals elected for their valour and military skill.⁴

¹ Curtius, Book IX, 8; McOrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 252.

² Arrian, Book V, Ch. I-II; McOrindle, *Invasion of India*, pp. 79-81. For a discussion of the site of Nysa, see Holdich, *Gates of India*, p. 122.

³ Diodorus, Book XVII, Ch. 96; McOrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 285.

⁴ Curtius, McOrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

The Accae tribes had 40,000 men under arms; their towns had walls of the most formidable strength and were equipped with every means of defence.¹ Much further south, probably in Gujarât, the Automela on the coast had 1,600 elephants, 5,000 cavalry and 1,50,000 foot.² Mention is made of the Pandae, the only race in India ruled by women, who had 300 towns.³ It is, however, doubtful where this tribe lived or if it is to be identified with the Pândyas of the extreme south. There is an interesting notice that Brâhmanas instigated a city to revolt against Alexander who had subdued it. Alexander recaptured the town and put all the Brâhmanas concerned to death.⁴ Plutarch also says that Alexander hanged many philosophers for encouraging the free states to revolt from his authority.⁵ It appears that Brâhmanas exercised a good deal of political influence.

Though often at war with one another, the tribes sometimes formed close alliances. The Malloi (Mâlavas) and Oxydrakai (Kṣâdrakas) entered into a confederacy, in the presence of a common foe, cementing it by wholesale inter-marriage, and were able to put into field 90,000 foot-soldiers, 10,000 cavalry, and 900 war-chariots.⁶ The two nations, we are told, were proud of their "liberty which for so many ages they had preserved inviolate." But they suffered a defeat at the hands of Alexander. The catastrophe seemed to break up the confederacy. The

¹ The Itinerary of Alexander the Great, by an unknown author, in McCrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 151.

² McCrindle, *India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 147.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 159, 194-95, 200-202.

⁴ Arrian, *Book VI, Ch. XVI*; McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 159.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁶ Curtius, McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 234.

Malloi are recorded to have declared that they were willing "to receive whatever satrap Alexander might appoint, pay the tribute he chose to impose and give as many hostages as he required." The Oxydrakai despatched 100 ambassadors, leading men of their cities and their provincial governors. They "all rode in chariots and were men of uncommon stature and of a very dignified bearing. Their robes were of linen embroidered with inwrought gold and purple."¹ The Yaudheyas in the southern portion of the Puñjâb and the Ārjunāyanas in the north-east of modern Rājputānā also represented confederations. They are mentioned by Pāṇini.²

Arrian says that the Indian territory, conquered by Alexander, comprised seven nations and 2,000 towns.³

Alexander's
political ar-
rangements.

Pliny puts the number of nations at nine and that of the towns at 5,000, none of which was less than a kos or nearly two miles in extent.⁴ Elsewhere Megasthenes remarks of India as a whole that the number of cities was so great that it could not be counted.⁵ It may be inferred that the number of towns was strikingly large but of their administrative structure we can gather little beyond what Megasthenes says of Pāṭaliputra.⁶ Alexander himself is said to have founded cities and fixed the boundaries of 'satrapies.'⁷ The Macedonian conqueror seems to have largely followed the Indian model in his political arrangements. He "not only appointed Poros to govern his own Indians,

¹ Arrian, Book VI, Ch. XIV; McCrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

² See J. R. A. S., 1897, pp. 887-88.

³ Arrian, Book VI, Ch. II.

⁴ McCrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 108.

⁵ Megasthenes, Fragment XXVI; McCrindle, *India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 68.

⁶ *Infra*, Ch. VIII.

⁷ Arrian, Book V, Ch. XIV; McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 156.

but added to his original territory another of still greater extent."¹ He allowed the various districts to be governed by their old rulers under the overlordship of Poros who was to be his own vassal. Besides the satrapy of Poros which extended from the Hydaspes (Jhelum) to the Hyphasis (Beas) there was the satrapy of Philip at Takṣaśilā who was also invested with the charge of a province extending as far south as the confluence of the Indus with the Acesinas (Chenāb). But Ámbhi also continued to rule at Takṣaśilā.² According to Curtius, Ámbhi and Eudamos were appointed joint administrators by Alexander.³ We do not know how their relations were co-ordinated and their spheres demarcated. The third satrapy comprised Sindh and was placed under Pithon, son of Agenor. From the rapidity with which his authority was shaken off, it appears that there were autonomous Indian chiefs under him as well. Alexander left an army of occupation consisting of Macedonians, Thracians and Greek mercenaries but its distribution is uncertain.⁴ It is probable that while civil administration was left to Indian chiefs, military authority was concentrated in the hands of Macedonian officers. In any case the Macedonian hold on India was extremely weak. The death of Alexander was the signal for its disappearance. In 321 B.C. at the time of the partition of Triparadisos, Pithon, son of Agenor, had ceased to be the satrap of the lower Indus valley and was ruling only west of that river.⁵

¹ Arrian, Book V, Ch. XIX; McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 109.

² Arrian, Book VI, Ch. XV.

³ Curtius, X, 1, 31.

⁴ Arrian, Book V, Ch. XV, XXVIII; Curtius, X, 1, 10; Diodorus, Book XIX, Ch. XIV, Book XVIII, Ch. III; Bevan, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 384-85.

⁵ Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, I, Ch. XIII. If Plutarch can be relied on, the memory of Alexander's exploits lasted for a long while. He records that on his retreat he erected altars to gods which the kings of the Praisai held in veneration even in his (Plutarch's) days. They would cross the river and offer sacrifices there in the Hellenic style (McCrindle, *Invasion of India*, p. 811).

The Macedonian episode exercised little influence on the development of Hindu political institutions. As Bevan puts it, "India and the Greek world only touched each other on their fringes and there never was a chance for the elements of the Hellenistic tradition to strike deep root in Indian soil."¹

¹Cambridge History of India, I. p. 385. See *infra*, Ch. XVII, Conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Mauryan Administration.

While in India, Alexander the Great was told of the Gangaridai and Prasii whose reputation for military prowess unnerved the worn-out, home-sick soldiers of Hellas. The term Gangaridai is derived obviously from the Ganges on whose banks the people were settled. Prasii is the Sanskrit *Prācya*—eastern. The two terms are used sometimes as if to denote two different peoples and sometimes as if both referred to the same people and country. The various contexts, however, make it clear that the people ruled by the king of Magadha or south Bihār are meant. Here, as a comparison of the Buddhist and Puranic accounts shows, the Śaiśunāga dynasty had been succeeded by a line of Nandas, probably of lowly extraction, whose last representative, said to be a barber's son, occupied the throne of Pāṭaliputra in 326 B.C.¹ Alexander heard, and Puru confirmed the report, that the king of the Gangaridai possessed an army of 20,000 horse, 2,00,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000

¹ Diodorus, XVII, 93; V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition, pp. 43–51; F. W. Thomas, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 469–71. S. V. Venkatesvara Aiyar, *Ind. Ant.*, 1915, pp. 41 et seq., regards the Nandas as a continuation of the Śaiśunāga dynasty. Jayaswal (*J. B. O. R. S.*, IV, 91–95) interprets Navanandāḥ as new Nandas instead of nine Nandas as hitherto accepted. Nanda Rāja is mentioned twice in the Hāthīgumphā inscription of Khāravela, the Jaina king of Orissā, c. 165 B.C. For the Puranic tradition, Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition; Dynasties of the Kali Age*,

elephants trained and equipped for war.¹ Plutarch has the version that the kings of the Gandaritai and the Praisoi awaited Alexander with 80,000 horse, 2,00,000 foot, 8,000 war chariots and 6,000 fighting elephants.² Pliny records that "the Prasii surpass in power and glory every other people, not only in this quarter, but one may say in all India, . . . Their king has in his pay a standing army of 6,00,000 foot-soldiers, 30,000 cavalry and 9,000 elephants, whence may be formed some conjecture as to the vastness of his resources."³ Even on the basis of the lowest of these figures for the army, it is manifest that Magadha had become a great military power and that it was almost certainly the strongest state in North India. It seems to have extended its sway over Kaliṅga or Orissā, Tīrhut in North Bihār, Aṅga, Kośala and Kāśī. Its crown passed, after a revolution which left lasting memories, to Candragupta, styled Maurya, in or about 320 B.C.⁴ It is certain that Candragupta further extended the bounds of the

¹ Diodorus, XVII, 93.

² Plutarch, Alexander, 62.

³ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, Book VI, Ch. 22.

⁴ A tradition recorded in an inscription of the 12th century A.D. states that Kuntala, a large tract including the Western Deccan as well as Northern Mysore, was ruled by the Nandas and that the Kadamba kings claimed descent from Nanda (Rice, *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions*, p. 3). But this assertion finds no support in earlier tradition. The Matsya, Vāyu and Brahmanḍa Purāṇas call Mahāpadma Nanda Sarvakaśatriyāntaka, destroyer of all Kṣatriyas. The statement supports the tradition that the Nandas were not Kṣatriyas (V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56; Thomas, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 467-73). The course of the revolution is indicated in Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa*, which though composed probably in the seventh century A.D. (Rapson, *J. R. A. S.*, 1900, p. 535) or, according to Jacobi, in the 9th century A.D. (*Vienna Oriental Journal*, II, 1888, p. 212), is, as Hillebrandt emphasises, based on ancient court tradition (Tawney, *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 910). Konow (*Ind. Ant.*, 1914, p. 68) places the play about the 5th century A.D. See also *Ind. Ant.*, 1913, pp. 265-67. For Greek and Roman references to Candragupta, Wilson, *Preface* to his translation of the *Mudrārākṣasa*. The *Mahāvamśa* (tr. Geiger, p. 27) calls Candragupta a scion of the Moriya clan. The *Divyāvadāna* (ed. Cowell and Neil, 370, 409) calls the Mauryas Kṣatriyas.

kingdom he had won. He probably led the revolt against the Macedonian garrisons and took possession of the territory they guarded. He overran the rest of North India or at any rate got his suzerainty acknowledged throughout the region. He resisted the invasion of Seleucus Nikator and, in exchange for 500 elephants, got the satrapies of the Paropanisadai, Aria, Arachosia and, perhaps, part of Gedrosia, roughly, modern Afghânistân and Baluchistân, about 303 B.C.¹ For the first time North India was united under one sceptre. Kaliṅga seems to have asserted its independence but a good deal of other territory was added to the empire of Magadha. Candragupta founded a new era.²

Magasthenes, who at first represented Seleucus of Bactria at the court of Silyrtios, satrap of Arachosia (Kandahâr) and who, later, was sent on several missions to Candragupta, wrote what seems to have been the most comprehensive account of India. But it is preserved only in extracts in later writers which sometimes contradict one another. Whether he actually wrote out the monstrosities about gold-digging ants, men with ears large enough to sleep in, men without mouths or noses or with only one eye or spider legs, etc.,³ which have been put into his mouth may be doubted but it is clear that he knew only Pâtaliputra and

¹ Plutarch, Alexander, 62. Justin, XV, 4. V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 121—26. Thomas, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 467—73. See also George Macdonald, *Hellenic Kingdoms of Syria, Bactria and Parthia*, in the *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 427—62.

² The Hâthīgumphâ Inscription of Khâravêla is dated the year 165 of the Râjâ Muriya (J.B.O.R. S., III, Part IV, pp. 461 et seq.). 164 As Bühler pointed out, the Mauryan era commences from the accession of Candragupta and not from the coronation of Aśoka as Bhagvân Lâl Indrajî supposed. On Candragupta's accession, see also Mahâvamsâ Tîkā, p. 123.

³ Strabo, McOrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*, pp. 60.—63; also Pliny, *Mist. Nat.*, VII, ii. 14—22,

the districts he passed through. His observations apply only to North India and particularly to Magadha. Megasthenes's account of Indian castes is professedly reproduced by Diodorus,¹ Arrian,² Strabo³ and Pliny,⁴ who, however, differ in details. They all agree in summarising that according to Megasthenes, the population of India was divided into seven castes. The Philosophers, though inferior in numbers, prevailed over all "in point of dignity." Exempt from public duties, they were neither the masters nor the servants of others, but engaged themselves in performing sacrifices for others and foretelling the future. The second caste, consisting of the husbandmen, 'far more numerous than the others,' were likewise exempt from 'fighting and other public services.' They devoted the whole of their time to tillage and entirely avoided going into towns. "The third class consists of the neat-herds and shepherds and, in general, of all herdsmen, who neither settle in towns nor in villages, but live in tents." "The fourth class consists of the artisans. Of these some are armourers, while others make the implements which husbandmen and others find useful in their different callings," says Arrian. "This class is not only exempted from paying taxes, but even receives maintenance from the royal exchequer." Strabo, however, enumerates several sub-divisions of the fourth class. It "consists of those who work as traders, of those who send wares, and of those who are employed in bodily labour. Some of them pay tribute and render to the state certain prescribed services. But the armour-makers and ship-builders receive wages and their victuals from the king, for whom alone they work . . ." The fifth class, second in point of numbers, consisted of fighting men, who, when not engaged in war, gave themselves up to idleness

¹ Diodorus, II, 40-41.

² Arrian, *Indika*, XI, XII.

³ Strabo, XV, 1, 46-49, also 58-60.

⁴ Pliny, VI, 22.

and amusement. "The sixth class consists of the overseers. It is their province to inquire into and superintend all that goes on in India, . . ." (Arrian.) "The seventh caste consists of the councillors and assessors—of those who deliberate on public affairs. It is the smallest class, looking to number, but the most respected, on account of the high character and the wisdom of its members; for from their ranks the advisers of the king are taken, and the treasurers of the state, and the arbiters who settle disputes. The generals of the army also, and the chief magistrates, usually belong to this class . . . No one is allowed to marry out of his own caste or follow an art except his own: for instance, a soldier cannot become a husbandman or an artisan a philosopher." (Arrian.)

The account of Megasthenes does not harmonise with the traditional Hindu system of caste. But it is difficult to believe that he was ignorant of the latter and failed to portray it with even a distant approach to exactitude. None could have lived even for a short while in India without knowing the salient features of caste. Unless he has been hopelessly distorted, Megasthenes cannot be held to be describing caste. What he seems to do is to observe the dominant occupations and to give his own impressions of the actual division of the population. As a Greek he approaches the question largely, though not exclusively, from the angle of the state. Everywhere he mentions how a particular caste stood in relation to the state. Here lies the chief value of his account. He may have erred in thinking that the classes were endogamic groups, though it is not impossible that the members of a class generally married only among themselves. It must be emphasised that, of the words used by the classical authors, *γενος* and *φυλον* alone connote the ideas of race and family. Both are borrowed from the language of Greek social

organisation and theory; *γενος* is used by Plato in the Republic. The terms really mean class or tribe. The two other words *μερος* and *συστημα* do not imply race at all. They can be used for any groups, organic or mechanical.¹ We cannot be sure of the exact words employed by Megasthenes, for the discrepancies in the four accounts attributed to him prove them to be summaries rather than quotations. In this connection 'class' is a better translation than 'caste.' Megasthenes indicates that there was a ruling class in India, small in numbers but dominating the rest of society through its talents and force of character. It filled the higher ranks of the civil and military services. It was the nobility, the aristocracy of the kingdom. It stood aloof from the large class which furnished the soldiery of the realm. It is again clear that the state employed large numbers of workmen in its factories and put itself in touch with other classes of people who performed certain services.

The government of the country was despotic. The king not only reigned but ruled from day to day. Curtius, in his History of Alexander the Great, notes that the Indian king's palace "is open to all comers even when the king is having his hair combed and dressed. It is then that he gives audience to ambassadors, and administers justice to his subjects."² Strabo says that the king never slept during the day-time and that the hearing of cases occupied him the whole day.³ All the same he lived in the greatest luxury and pomp. The splendour and magnificence of the palace far surpassed that of Susa and Ekbatana. "In the parks," continues Aelian on the basis of Megasthenes, "tame

¹ I am indebted to Dr. H. N. Randle of the University of Allāhābād for an explanation of the Greek terms.

² Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander the Great, Bk. VIII, Ch. IX.

³ Strabo, XV, 1, 55.

peacocks are kept, and pheasants which have been domesticated, and among cultivated plants there are some to which the king's servants attend with special care, for there are shady groves and pasture-grounds planted with trees which the art of the woodsman has deftly interwoven. . . Within the palace grounds there are also artificial ponds of great beauty, in which they keep fish of enormous size but quite tame. No one has permission to fish for these except the king's sons while yet in their boyhood. These youngsters amuse themselves without the least risk of being drowned while fishing in the unruffled sheet of water and learning how to sail their boats."¹ Quintus Curtius has the following general description of Indian potentates:—"The luxury of their kings, or as they call it, their magnificence, is carried to a vicious excess without a parallel in the world. When the king condescends to show himself in public his attendants carry in their hands silver censers and perfume with incense all the road by which it is his pleasure to be conveyed. He lolls in a golden palanquin, garnished with pearls which dangle all round it, and he is robed in fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold. Behind his palanquin follow men-at-arms, and his body-guards, of whom some carry boughs of trees on which birds are perched trained to interrupt business with their cries. The palace is adorned with gilded pillars, clasped all round with a vine embossed in gold, while silver images of those birds which most charm the eye diversify the workmanship . . . (After audience) his slippers being . . . taken off, his feet are rubbed with scented ointments. His principal exercise is hunting; amid the vows and songs of his courtesans he shoots the game enclosed within the royal park. The arrows, which are two cubits long, are discharged with more effort than effect, for though the force of these missiles depends on their lightness, they are loaded with an obnoxious

¹ Aelian, *De Anim.*, XIII, XVIII.

weight. He rides on horseback when making short journey, but when bound on a distant expedition he rides in a chariot mounted on elephants, and, huge as these elephants are, their bodies are covered completely over with trappings of gold. That no form of shameless profligacy may be wanting, he is accompanied by a long train of courtesans carried in golden palanquins, and this troop holds a separate place in the procession from the queen's retinue, and is as sumptuously appointed. His food is prepared by women, who also serve him with wine, which is much used by all the Indians. When the king falls into a drunken sleep his courtesans carry him away to his bed-chamber invoking the gods of the night in their native hymns."¹ Court festivals had already sprung up. It seems a great festival was held when the king washed his hair.² Strabo says that "the care of the king's person is entrusted to women, who also are bought from their parents. The body-guards and the rest of the soldiery are posted outside the gates. . . . The sons succeed the father. Moreover, the king does not sleep in the day-time and at night he is compelled, as a precaution against attack, to change his couch from hour to hour. . . ."³

Arrian says that the succession was hereditary but if the regular line failed, the most meritorious man was elected to the kingship.⁴ It may be assumed that the selection was ordinarily confined to the royal family. The king had a number of counsellors, mostly perhaps the chief officers but occasionally others as well. Royal counsellors commanded the respect of the people. Besides these

The Adminis-
tration.

¹ Quintus Curtius, Book VIII, Ch. IX.

² Strabo, McCrindle, India as described in Classical Literature, p. 75.

³ Strabo, XV, I, 55.

⁴ Arrian, Indika, Ch. VIII,

regular functionaries others were sometimes consulted. According to Strabo, the king employed messengers to obtain the advice of sages who lived in the jungles.¹ Megasthenes makes it clear that the king's government was carried on by a bureaucracy. From Strabo's version of Megasthenes, there appear to have been three classes of officers—the rural, urban and military. The first class was concerned with land revenue, irrigation which had been very remarkably developed, forests, communications and general supervision. To quote Strabo, "some superintend the rivers, measure the land, as is done in Egypt, and inspect the sluices, by which water is let out from the main channels into their branches, so that every one may have an equal supply of it. The same persons have charge also of the huntsmen, and are entrusted with the power of rewarding or punishing them according to their deserts. They collect the taxes and superintend the occupations connected with land, as those of the wood-cutters, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the miners. They construct roads, and, at every ten stadia, set up a pillar to show the by-roads and distances."

Making allowance for possible exaggerations, it must be admitted that the activity of the state covered a wide range even over the countryside. Unfortunately, Megasthenes gives no idea of the structure of local government. But he makes it clear that the administration of the capital was of a very intense character. Candragupta's capital Pâtāliputra, called Pālībothra by the Greeks, was situated

Pâtāliputra. on the confluence of the Ganges and the Son² and, says Strabo, was "eighty stadia in length and fifteen in breadth. It is of the shape of

¹ Strabo, McCrindle, *India as described in Classical literature*, p. 67. Bardesanes, *Ibid.*, p. 168.

² For the identification of the Erannoas or Erinnoboas, mentioned by the Greeks with the Son, see Cunningham, *Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv.*, XI, p. 154.

a parallelogram, and is girded with a wooden wall pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows. It has a ditch in front for defence, and for receiving the sewage of the city."¹ Pliny also remarks that it was "a very large and wealthy city."² The wooden wall was pierced by sixty-four gates and crowned by five hundred and seventy towers.³ The capital dominated the kingdom which, as well as its ruler, was called by its name.⁴

"Those who have charge of the city," says Strabo, "are divided into six bodies of five each. The members of

The adminis- tration of the capital.	the first look after everything relating to the industrial arts. Those of the second attend to the entertainment of foreigners.
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To these they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their mode of life by means of those persons whom they give to them for assistants. They escort them on the way when they leave the country, or, in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relations. They take care of them when they are sick, and, if they die, bury them.⁵ The third body consists of those who inquire, when and how births and deaths occur, with a view, not only of

¹ Strabo, XV, 1, 35-36.

² Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, Book VI, Ch. 22. For the Greek idea of India's Geography see Ptolemy, Langlois, *Géographie de Ptolémée*, Paris, 1887, reproduces the map of India from the Ms. of Ptolemy's Geography preserved at the Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos.

³ Fragment XXVI (McOrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 68). Waddell, *Discovery of the Exact Site of Asoka's Classic Capital of Pataliputra*, revised edition, 1903. Spooner, *Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv. of India, Eastern Circle*, 1912-13, pp. 55-61. Codrington, *Ancient India*, etc., pp. 20-22; for archaeological details, *Ann. Rep. Arch. Sur.*, 1912-13, 53-86; Spooner, *Excavations at Pataliputra*.

⁴ Pliny, Bk. VI, Ch. 22. Strabo, XV, 1, 35-36.

⁵ The duties of these officers resembled those of the Greek Proxenoi.

levying a tax, but also in order that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of the government. The fourth class superintend trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures and see that the products in their seasons are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity, unless he pays a double tax. The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old, and there is a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenth of the prices of the articles sold. Fraud in the payment of this tax is punishable with death. Such are the functions which these bodies separately discharge. In their collective capacity they have charge both of their special departments, and also of matters affecting the general interest, as the keeping of public buildings in proper repair, the regulation of prices, the care of markets, harbours, and temples."

Thus the affairs of the capital were administered by a board of thirty officers which attended to some of the matters jointly and entrusted the rest to committees of five each. Through these officers the state controlled and regulated the whole economic life of the city, besides performing some other functions. In the Greek account these officers are called *Astynomi* which was in Greece the designation of some public functionaries who partly corresponded to Roman aediles. It is interesting that in ancient India, Greece and Rome alike public buildings, both religious and secular, were entrusted to a definite class of officers. The record of the census in ancient India is interesting but unfortunately we are not told whether it was confined to the capital or whether it obtained throughout the country. It is probable, though we have no documentary evidence to prove, that the

system of administration which prevailed at Pāṭaliputra obtained in other cities also.

Megasthenes remarks that Indians decided judicial cases according to unwritten laws. It seems that the

Justice. Greek writer took *Smṛiti* in the literal sense of memory instead of in the sense of "the sacred tradition concerning law" which the term signified.¹

But in any case he makes it clear that there were judicial officers, for the king alone could hardly have disposed of the whole litigation even in the capital. We are told, indeed, that Indians seldom went to law but the elaborate provisions of substantive law and procedure in the *Dharma Sūtras*, for instance, tell a different tale. Megasthenes has left on record that theft was a thing of rare occurrence.² But the Mauryan criminal code seems to have been a stern one. "A person convicted of bearing false witness," says Strabo, "suffers a mutilation of his extremities. He who maims another not only suffers in return the loss of the like limb, but his hand is cut off. If he causes a workman to lose his hand or his eye, he is put to death." Johannes Stobaios who lived probably about 500 A.D. records a curious ordeal on the authority of Bardesanes. There was a lake of Probation. If the accused denied his guilt but refused the ordeal of the lake, he was assumed to be guilty and punished as such. If he consented to the ordeal, "they conduct him to the lake with his accusers, for these also are subjected to the ordeal by water, lest the charge they prefer should be fictitious or malevolent. On entering the water they pass through to the other side of the lake, which is everywhere knee-deep for every one who goes in. Now, should the accused be innocent he goes in and passes through without any fear and is never wet above the knee, but, if guilty, before he goes

¹ Bühler, *Indian Palæography*, tr. Ind. Ant., 1904, p. 6.

² Strabo, XV, 1, 53.

far, the water is above his head. Then the Brâhmanas drag him out of the water and deliver him up alive to his accusers, considering him to deserve any punishment short of death. But this is of rare occurrence, since no one cares to deny his guilt through dread of the ordeal by water."¹ Details apart, a water-ordeal might have been known to Mauryan India.

The practice of committee government obtained in the sphere of military administration. There were "six divisions, with five members to each.

The military
administration.

One division is appointed to co-operate with the admiral of the fleet, another with the superintendent of the bullock trains, which are used for transporting engines of war, food for the soldiers, provender for the cattle, and other military requisites. They supply servants, who beat the drum, and others who carry gongs; grooms also for the horses, and mechanists and their assistants. To the sound of the gongs they send out foragers to bring in grass, and, by a system of rewards and punishments, ensure the work being done with dispatch and safety. The third division has charge of the foot-soldiers, the fourth of the horses, the fifth of the war-chariots, and the sixth of the elephants. There are royal stables for the horses and elephants, and also a royal magazine for the arms, because the soldier has to return his arms to the magazine and his horse and his elephant to the stables. They use the elephants without bridles. The chariots are drawn on the march by oxen, but the horses are led along by a halter, that their legs may not be galled and inflamed, nor their spirits damped by drawing chariots. In addition to the charioteer, there are two fighting men who sit up in the chariot beside him. The war-elephant carries four men—three who shoot arrows and the driver." Megasthenes says that "a private person is not allowed to

¹ Johannes Stobaios, *Physica*, I, 56.

keep either a horse or an elephant. These animals are said to be the special property of the king, and persons are appointed to take care of them."¹ It is probable that for military reasons the state had the monopoly of these assets of warfare. It was again partly for military reasons that the government attended to the means of communication. Megasthenes speaks of the royal road leading from the western frontier to the capital Pāṭaliputra and measuring 10,000 stadia in length.²

The kingdom was divided into several provinces, each ruled by a sort of viceroy. The later Jûnâgaḍh inscription

of Rudradâman records that Surâṣṭra or

Other officers. Kâṭhiâwâḍ was governed by the Vaiśya Puṣyagupta in Candragupta's time and by the Yavana Tushâspa under Aśoka. The former governor is designated Râṣṭriya, while the latter is called Adhiṣṭhâya.³ The details are important for another reason. They show that high officers were sometimes chosen from any class of persons. Throughout the empire there were large numbers of spies who infested towns, camps and the countryside alike. Megasthenes implies that courtesans were employed to assist in the task of espionage. Then there were other numerous employees of state. According to Strabo, armour-makers and shipbuilders could work only for the king. For military reasons the two industries might have been state monopolies. Lastly, the state made allowances of grain to herdsmen and hunters who cleared the land of wild beasts and fowls.⁴

Agriculture seems to have received the serious attention of the state. Rudradâman's Jûnâgaḍh inscription

¹ Megasthenes, Fragment XXXVI; Strabo, XV, 1, 41-43.

² Ten stadia=2,022½ yards.

³ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 6, pp. 43, 46-47.

⁴ Diodorus, II, 40, 41; Strabo, XV, 1, 39-41.

records that Puṣyagupta formed the lake Sudarsana by damming a stream between a citadel and a rock. Its supplemental works were executed by Tushâspa.¹ Megasthenes testifies to the work of irrigation officers in rural areas. Besides the scheme of irrigation, there was the unwritten law that agriculturists were exempt from military and other service. "Nor would an enemy coming upon a husbandman at work on his land do him any harm, for men of this class, being regarded as public benefactors, are protected from all injury. The land, thus remaining unravaged, and producing heavy crops, supplies the inhabitants with all that is requisite to make life very enjoyable."² We are told that the agriculturists "pay a land-tribute to the king, because all India is the property of the crown, and no private person is permitted to own land. Besides the land-tribute, they pay into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil." Most probably, Megasthenes is accurate in his latter statement. Hindu theory fixed the proportion of the state demand at one-sixth of the gross produce but in practice it might well have been raised to one-fourth. But there is nothing in indigenous sources to indicate that this revenue was supplemented by another tax on the supposition that the crown was the owner of the whole land. The distinction between land-revenue and land-tax does not seem to have occurred to the Hindu mind. It is probable that the assertion of Megasthenes applies only to the crown land which was merely cultivated for the king. In Strabo's version Megasthenes is made to say that "the whole of the land is the property of the king, and the husbandmen till

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 6. For the position of the lake, Arch. Surv. West. Ind., 1898-99, paragraph 49.

² Diodorus, II, 40, 41.

it on condition of receiving one-fourth of the produce."¹ But this is clearly wrong. 'Receiving' has, perhaps, been substituted for 'paying.' Arrian in his version of Megasthenes says that the wandering shepherds and neat-herds "are subject to tribute, and this they pay in cattle,"² though according to Strabo, they received something from the state. Again, he says that handicraftsmen and retail dealers "have to perform gratuitously certain public services, and to pay tribute from the products of their labour." This rule, of course, would not apply to shipbuilders, sailors and manufacturers of weapons of war who were paid by the state.

In the capital, and probably also in other cities, one-tenth of the prices of the articles sold went into the coffers of the state. "Fraud in the payment of this tax is punishable with death." There seems to have been a license-fee for vendors. "No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity, unless he pays a double tax." (Strabo.) The sale of certain articles manufactured in government factories brought something. (Ibid.) The presents made to the king must be reckoned among the regular sources of income. We learn from the Greek accounts that at the court festival of the king's hair-washing, they sent great presents to the king and vied with one another in displaying their wealth in that way.³ Aelian has it that subjects presented animals like cranes, geese, hens, ducks, turtle, doves, partridge, etc., and also tamed tigers, panthers, apes, etc., etc.⁴

Megasthenes notes that philosophers who made any useful suggestions for the improvement of crops or cattle or

¹ Strabo, XV, 1, 39-41.

² Arrian, *Indika*, XI, XII.

³ Strabo, McCrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 143, 145.

for the promotion of public welfare were exempted from all taxation.¹ It seems that the Mauryas
 Exemptions. did not follow orthodox Brahmanic theory which would grant such exemption to all Brāhmaṇas. Only those who contributed to the public good received that privilege. There is a statement in Bardesanes that "the Brāhmaṇas pay no taxes like other citizens and are subject to no king." But from the context it seems that this refers only to sages and saints.² As already noted, artisans in the service of the state paid no taxes.

There are a few statements in Megasthenes which seem to indicate that the Mauryan dominions included some protectorates, monarchical or oligarchical.
 Protectorates. The overseers, as a class, are said to "make report to the king, or where the state is without a king, to the magistrates."³ According to Arrian, cultivators pay tribute to the king and the independent states.⁴ Since the fact of Mauryan overlordship over the whole of North India is well-established, the only probable explanation of these passages is that there were some autonomous principalities within its bounds. It seems that the Western oligarchies, noticed by the Greeks, passed into the orbit of the Mauryan empire without changing their constitution or relinquishing their internal self-government.

The foundation of the Mauryan empire marked an epoch in Indian history. It is probable that the requirements of the new large state led to some administrative changes. But the paucity of material makes it impossible to trace them in detail.
 Bindusāra.

¹ Strabo, XV, 1, 39—41.

² McOrindle, *India as described in Classical Literature*.

³ Diodorus, II, 40, 41.

⁴ Arrian, *Indika*, XI, XII.

Of Bindusāra, the son and successor of Candragupta,¹ we know little. The range of his diplomacy extended as far as Egypt whose sovereign Ptolemy Philadelphos (285—247 B.C.) sent an envoy to the Mauryan court.² The Pāli legends concerning Aśoka's early life show that royal princes were appointed provincial governors. The high-handedness of local officers could sometimes provoke a revolt. Prince Aśoka had to be sent once to Taxila to pacify a popular insurrection. As he neared the town, the people came out to meet him and said, "we are not opposed to the prince nor even to the king (Bindusāra) but the wicked ministers (Duṣṭāmātyāḥ) insult us."³ But, according to tradition, history repeated itself in the reign of Aśoka. Once again a royal prince Kuṇāla went to quell a disturbance and met with the same reception from the people. The

Prince. Pāli legends paint Prince Aśoka himself as a tyrannical governor indulging in calculated cold-blooded atrocities. But here the motive seems to be to create a Kālāsoka or Caṇḍāsoka for contrast with Dharmāsoka to bring out the divine influence of Buddhism. Nor is it possible to be sure of the truth of the statement in the Ceylonese chronicles that the death of Bindusāra was followed by a fierce civil war, chiefly between the prince-viceroy of Ujjayini and Takṣaśilā.⁴

¹ For the Jaina tradition of Candragupta's abdication, migration to the south, and death by voluntary starvation in the approved Jaina style, see Rice, Mysore and Coorg from Inscriptions, 1909, pp. 8—9. For a criticism, Fleet, Ind. Ant., XXI, 1892, p. 156, also 287. If the authenticity of the tradition could be established, it would be interesting as showing the influence of religion on politics.

² Pliny, McOrindle, Ancient India as described in Classical Literature, p. 108.

³ Divyāvadāna (ed. Cowell and Neil), p. 371.

⁴ Mahāvamsa, V, 189. Divyāvadāna, 382. The accompanying tradition that Aśoka slaughtered his brothers—99 in number!—before he ascended the throne is evidently false, as Aśoka speaks of his brothers in his edicts. For Bindusāra, Jayaswal, J. B. O. R. S., II, 79—83.

After the conquest of Kalinga in the ninth year of his reign, the empire of Aśoka comprised the whole of India except the extreme south ruled by Aśoka's empire. the Coṣa, Pāṇḍya, Śātiyaputra and Keralaputra kings.¹ His edicts, primarily religious and moral, are unpolitical in character but they do indicate that the empire was not governed under a uniform system. Leaving out of account the independent territories mentioned in the edicts, it is possible to distinguish half-independent regions from the king's domains. To the former category, for instance, belong the Āndhras.² The regions lying along the frontiers of the empire seem to be autonomous and insecure. The king was particularly anxious to conciliate them. In the second separate Rock Edict Dhauli, he gives the assurance that "this alone is my wish with reference to the borderers . . . that they may not be

¹ For the accession of Aśoka, *Dīpavaṃśa*, VI, 18, 24; *Mahāvamśa*, V, 34. *Buddhaghōṣa*, *Samantapāsādikā*, p. 800. The comparison of the dates of the foreign monarchs with the regnal years mentioned in Aśoka's edicts yields slightly divergent dates of Aśoka's accession. Jayaswal (*J.A.S.B.*, New Series, 1918, p. 217) holds that Aśoka ascended the throne in 276 B.C. and was consecrated in 272 B.C. See also Senart (*Ind. Ant.*, XX, 242). For the reign of Aśoka, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, New Edition, by Hultzsch. For a criticism, B. M. Barua, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, II, March, 1926, pp. 88 et seq. Cunningham's old edition (1877) is still useful for topographical details. Senart, *Inscriptions de Piyāḍāsi*, the first reconstruction of Aśoka's history from the inscriptions, is valuable. For its translation, *Indian Antiquary*. For further discussions, F. W. Thomas, *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, 1915, 1919. Fleet, *J.R.A.S.*, 1903, 1904, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911. Gauri Shankar Hira Chandra Ojha and Shyam Sundar Das, *Aśoka ki Pradhāna Dharmalipiyan* (Hindi) in *Devī Prasāda Aitihāsika Pustakamālā*, No. 4. Among modern narrations may be mentioned V. A. Smith, *Aśoka* (*Rulers of India Series*), 3rd edition; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka* (*Carmichael Lectures*, 1923). The *Tāmil Saṅgam* author Māṃūlnār makes several references to Mauryan invasions of the south and says that the Mauryas advanced into *Tāmil* territory as far as Mohur (S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, *Beginnings of South Indian History*, Ch. II; also *Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*). But these references can only relate to Aśoka's predecessors. On the relations of the Mauryas with the south, see also *Tārānātha*, Schiefner, p. 89.

² Rock Edict XIII. Second Rock Edict, Dhauli, Jaugada.

afraid of me, but may have confidence (in me); that they may obtain only happiness from me, not misery; that they may (learn) this, that Devânâmpriya will forgive them what can be forgiven; that they may (be induced) by me (to) practise morality; (and) that they may attain (happiness in) this world and (in) the other world." The prince-governor and Mahâmâtras of Tosali are repeatedly requested and commanded to set the hearts of the borderers at rest. Special officers, called Antamahâpâlas, had to be appointed to deal with frontiers-men. Even the mild emperor had sometimes to hold out threats to some forest tribes. So faint was the line between autonomy and independence that the frontiers-men within the empire are sometimes confused with those beyond and both are indiscriminately referred to as borderers.¹ In the heart of the empire, too, there seem to be some regions which had not been brought completely under Mauryan rule and which are called Âhâla in the Râpnâth and Sârnâth edicts. The extreme rapidity with which the empire was built up and the equally striking rapidity with which it broke up point to a confederate rather than a unitary state. Kalinga, for instance, owned the sway of the Nanda rulers of Magadha but it soon became independent and had to be reconquered, after a most stubborn fight by Aśoka, only to regain complete independence in the second century B.C.² After its incorporation into the empire, a region might retain its identity, in large part its institutions and even its old dynasty in a subordinate capacity and might be able to throw off the imperial yoke at the first favourable opportunity.

The Inscriptions which are the primary authority for the reign of Aśoka, betray a little Persian influence. As

¹ Rook Edicts V, XIII.

² Hâthigumphâ Inscription, J.B.O.R.S., 1917, pp. 425-507.

Senart pointed out, their opening formula resembles the commencement of the proclamations of the Achaemenides from Darius to Artaxerxes Ochus. They come nearest the Naqsh-i-Rustam Inscription in which Darius bequeaths his precepts in policy, morals and religion to his successors.¹ It is possible, but there is no literary or epigraphic evidence to prove, that the whole system of Imperial organisation in India derived suggestions from Persia.² From the political point of view, the Inscriptions of Aśoka are valuable, firstly, for a graphic presentation of the practical ideal of the state which the emperor sought to realise and, secondly, for a few glimpses into the structure and working of institutions. In so many words Aśoka enunciates

Paternalism.

the paternal view of government. "For as one feels confident after having entrusted his child to an intelligent nurse, thinking 'the intelligent nurse will be able to keep my child well,' so the Lājukas were appointed by me for the welfare and happiness of the country people."³ He tells the officials of Tosali that confidence should be inspired in the people, "they should be made to learn that Devānāmpriya is to them like a father, that Devānāmpriya loves them like himself, and that they are to Devānāmpriya like his own children."⁴ Again, "all men are my children," whose 'complete' welfare and happiness in this world and in the next he must promote.⁵ Thanks partly to the vivid realisation of this idea, Aśoka rises above the narrow views of Brāhmanas or others and looks to the welfare of all. "I am directing

¹ Senart, *Ind. Ant.*, XX, 255-56. V. A. Smith, *Aśoka*, p. 141.

² *Infra*, Conclusion, Ch. XVII.

³ Fourth Pillar Edict, Delhi-Topra.

⁴ Second Separate Rock Edict, Dhauli.

⁵ Jaugada Edict I. Separate Rock Edict I, Dhauli. Sixth Pillar Edict, Delhi-Topra.

my attention to all classes"—"to those who are far and near."¹ Even the inhabitants of the forest were pacified and instructed.² Beyond the pale of humanity, the lower creatures came within the purview of the Emperor's activities. "On bipeds and quadrupeds, on birds and aquatic animals various benefits have been conferred by me, (even) to the boon of life."³

As a corollary of paternalism, the king must ceaselessly exert himself for the public good. "I am never satisfied," he

remarks, "with (my) exertion or with (my) dispatch of business. The welfare of the whole world is an esteemed duty

with me. And the root of that, again, is this, namely, exertion and dispatch of business."⁴ No limits are recognised to the scope of state-activity. The "welfare of the whole world" was to be promoted in every walk of life and by all possible means. Though Aśoka's mission was one of moral amelioration above all, he was alive to the calls of material comfort. "... On the roads banyan trees were caused to be planted by me, (in order that) they might afford shade to cattle and men, (and) mango-groves were caused to be planted. And (at intervals) of eight kos wells were caused to be dug by me, and flights of steps (for descending into the water) were caused to be built. Numerous drinking places were caused to be established by me, here and there, for the enjoyment of cattle and men."⁵ He encouraged the cultivation of medicinal herbs, roots and fruits. He arranged for the medical treatment of men and cattle not merely in his own dominions, but also in foreign lands.⁶ For the relief of distress, charity was organised on

¹ Jaugada Edict I.

² Rock Edict XIII.

³ Pillar Edict II, Delhi-Topra.

⁴ Rock Edict VI.

⁵ Pillar Edict VII, Delhi-Topra.

⁶ Rock Edict II.

a lavish scale on behalf of the emperor and his relations.¹ Members of the royal family followed the example of Aśoka. For instance, the second queen made endowments, registered in her own name, for mango-groves or gardens, almshouses and other charitable purposes.² In fact, the emperor was delighted to discover that people in general were imitating his good deeds.³

The higher concerns of life received more attention. In fact, the Seventh Pillar Edict seems to imply that the provision of material comforts was only subsidiary to the promotion of the Dhamma.

Moral welfare.

In Rock Edicts IX and XI, Aśoka states that there is no such gift as that of Dhamma. His Dhamma, though free from all sectarianism, is not merely the sum of moral duties as Senart supposed.⁴ It is also a way of life, an outlook on things in general, a certain measure of the values of social life. Aśoka admits that his predecessors had had the desire to promote Dhamma, but, he continues, they had adopted no adequate measures and, therefore, men had made no progress. He thought seriously on the promotion of morality, "How could I elevate them by the promotion of Dhamma?" It occurred to him, "I shall issue proclamations on Dhamma, (and) shall order instruction in Dhamma (to be given). Hearing this men will conform to (it), will be elevated and will (be made to) progress considerably by the promotion of Dhamma." So,

¹ Pillar Edict VII, Delhi-Topra. Yuan Chwang (tr. Beal, Si-yu-ki, II, p. 91) says that it was inscribed on a pillar at Pāṭaliputra that Aśoka thrice gave away and purchased back Jambūdvīpa (India). The large bounty of Aśoka may have given rise to this tradition.

² Queen's Pillar Edict, Allāhābād-Kosam.

³ Pillar Edict VII.

⁴ Ind. Ant., XX, 260.

proclamations were issued all over the realm, including the frontiers. These were inscribed "either in an abridged (form), or of middle size, or at full length," according to local circumstances.¹ The promotion of Dhamma was the true conquest, always to be preferred to conquest by force.² There is, however, nothing revolutionary in Aśoka's Dhamma. In one respect, it is remarkably conservative. Aśoka constantly reiterates the injunction to obey one's parents and revere the elders.³

The liberalising element in Aśokan ethics is the precept and example of universal toleration. Buddhist Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas alike are to be revered and supported.* Intolerance is declared to be a very short-sighted policy. "For whoever praises his own sect, or blames other sects,—all this out of devotion to his own sect,—if he is acting thus, he rather injures his own sect very severely. Therefore concord alone is very meritorious, (*i.e.*) that they should both hear and obey each other's morals. For this is the desire of Devānāmpriya (*viz.*) that all sects should be full of learning and should be pure in doctrine."⁵ Aśoka himself honoured all religions.⁶ He declared that "all sects may reside everywhere."⁷ He should like the doctrine of all sects to be pure.⁸ As part of the regard for others, Aśoka inculcates politeness towards relations, friends and acquaintances.⁹

¹ Rock Edicts XII, XIV, Gīrnār. Sahasram Rock Inscription.

² Rock Edict XIII.

³ E.g., Rock Edicts III, IV, VII, IX. Brahmagiri Rock Inscription.

⁴ Rock Edicts III, IV, IX, XI, XIII. Pillar Edict V. It will appear that Śramaṇas did not always mean merely Buddhist priest or monk. Cf. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, XXXVIII; Aranyakāṇḍa, LXXIII; Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, XVIII. See also Beal, Ind. Ant., IX, p. 122.

⁵ Rock Edict XII (Gīrnār).

⁶ Pillar Edict VI.

⁷ Rock Edict VII.

⁸ Rock Edict XII.

⁹ Rock Edicts XIII, IV, XIII. Brahmagiri Rock Inscription.

Aśoka declares that progress in Dhamma was promoted in two ways—by inducing to meditate and by moral restrictions.¹ Both were required for the operation of the humanitarian code on which the emperor had set his heart. He exhorts all to show proper courtesy and kindness to servants and slaves.² He imposes restrictions on the slaughter or mutilation of animals. The Fifth Pillar Edict gives the long list of animals which had been declared inviolable for all times and places. It goes on to lay down that "cocks must not be caponed. Husks containing living animals must not be burnt. Forests must not be burnt either uselessly or in order to destroy (living beings). Living animals must not be fed with other living animals. Fish are inviolable and must not be sold on the three Cāturmāsīs (end) on the Tīṣyā full moon, during three days (*viz.*) the 14th, 15th and 1st (tithi) and invariably on every fast-day. And during these same days also no other classes of animals, which are in the elephant-park (and) in the preserves of the fishermen must be killed." On certain days no animals were to be castrated, no horses or bullocks were to be branded.³

As part of the Dhamma, Aśoka inculcates character-building. Every one must speak the truth,⁴ guard one's speech,⁵ moderate one's possessions and expenditure⁶ and be pure and good.⁷ Aśoka prescribes that regular instruction in Dhamma was to be imparted.⁸

¹ Pillar Edict VII, Delhi-Topra.

² Rock Edict IX.

³ Pillar Edicts II, V.

Cf. Vinaya Texts, Part I, S. B. E., XIII, p. x; Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism, p. 99. See also Rock Edict I which prohibits the slaughter of animals at sacrifices and promises that the slaughter of a few animals for the royal kitchen which still continued would be stopped.

⁴ Pillar Edict VII, Brahmagiri Rock Inscription.

⁵ Pillar Edict I.

⁶ Rock Edict III.

⁷ Pillar Edict VII.

⁸ Ibid.

Besides exhortations, the emperor employed demonstrations to promote righteousness. It had long been customary

to summon people by beat of drums to
 Demonstrations. shows and various displays. In a Jātaka,

for instance, a king thus summons a crowd
 to witness the taming of elephants.¹ The Greeks noted
 that the sound of shells and drums called crowds to spectacles as also for war.² But under Aśoka, as the Fourth Rock Edict records, the sound of drums became the sound of morality, calling the people to sacred representations, generally from the life of the Buddha, or showing glimpses of heavenly bliss.³ The whole administrative machinery of the state was utilised for the same purpose. The Third Pillar Edict requires all royal officers to help in the ethical mission in their quinquennial tours. Thirteen years after his coronation, the emperor created a special class of officers—a set of censors and missionaries—to further his aims. In the capital, in the country and in the extreme

border-lands which were inhabited by
 Censors and Missionaries. Greeks (Yonas), Kambojas, Gandhāras and
 others, these officers “are occupied with

all sects in establishing morality. . . They are occupied with servants and masters . . . for the . . . happiness of those who are devoted to morality, (and) in freeing (them) from desire (for worldly life). They are occupied in supporting prisoners (with money) . . . (if one has) children, or with those who are bewitched (*i.e.*, incurably ill) or with the aged.”⁴ Elsewhere he observes that his Dhamma Mahāmātras “are occupied with affairs of many kinds which are beneficial to

¹ Fick, *op. cit.*, tr. Maitra, p. 189.

² McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 68.

³ D. R. Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.*, XLII, 25-26. Khadirāṅgāra Jātaka.

⁴ Rock Edict V, Girnār.

ascetics as well as to householders, and they are occupied with all sects. Some busy themselves with the affairs of the Saṅgha, others with the Brāhmanas and Ājivakas;¹ others with the Nirgranthas; others were ordered by me to busy themselves with various (other) sects; (thus) different Mahāmātras (are busying themselves) specially with different congregations . . . my Mahāmātras of morality are occupied with these (congregations) as well as with all other sects."² Itthihaka Mahāmātras were charged with the performance of censorial and missionary duties towards women.³

In the course of his propagation of Dhamma, Aśoka attempted a few reforms which were necessary in his eyes.

A few reforms. He prohibited the slaughter of animals at sacrifices, in defiance of Brahmanic sentiment. He prohibited Samājas or festive gatherings where they indulged in excesses and where probably animal fights took place.⁴ He condemned many "vulgar and useless ceremonies" which women often practised "during illness, at the marriage of a son or daughter or when setting out on a journey." In place of them he recommended the practice of Dhamma.⁵

These injunctions might have run counter to the received creed of some sections of the population. But their motive was neither intolerance nor persecution. It was purely moral and humanitarian. Whatever might have been the ultimate foundation of his Dhamma in the view of Aśoka,

Aśoka and religion.

¹ On Ājivakas or Ājivikas, see B. M. Barua, *Ājivikas*; also *Journal of the Department of Letters*, 1920, Vol. II, pp. 1-80; *Ind. Ant.*, XX, p. 362; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, 1926-27, Vol. VIII, Pt. II, pp. 181-88; A. P. Bauerji Sastri, *J. B. O. R. S.*, March, 1926, p. 53; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.*, 1912, p. 287. See also J. R. A. S., 1913, pp. 669-74.

² Pillar Edict VII, Delhi-Topra.

³ Rock Edict XII.

⁴ Rock Edict I.

⁵ Rock Edict IX.

it is non-sectarian and non-theological as it stands. The phenomenon, indeed, is so striking that some scholars are inclined to believe that Aśoka was not a Buddhist at all.¹ Yet the Kausambi Pillar Edict, the Sarnāth Pillar Edict and the Sañchi Pillar Inscription show that the emperor was not only a Buddhist but, what is more important from our point of view, he also assumed something like the headship of the Buddhist church.² Hindu literature and epigraphy prove that priests always exercised some influence on the Hindu state but their lack of organisation and independent means exposed them in their turn to the influence of kings and nobles. The Buddhist Saṃgha certainly had an organisation but it was of an intensely local character and, therefore, ill-adapted to become a real political force or to resist the encroachment of the state. It might be willing to accept the control of a monarch whose piety and holy zeal were above suspicion. Aśoka posed as the guardian of the Buddhist Saṃgha and as the arbiter of its internal controversies. Perhaps there was a real apprehension of schism in the Saṃgha at the time. "My desire," says the emperor in the Sañchi Pillar Inscription, "is that the Saṃgha may be united and of long duration." He openly threatened disciplinary action against schismatics. "That monk or nun," so runs the inscription on the Sarnāth Pillar, "who shall break up the Saṃgha should be caused to put on white robes and to reside in a non-residence." The edict is communicated to monks and nuns; a copy of it is to be retained by the Mahāmātras, another deposited with the lay-worshippers, who should study it on the fast-day service. "And as far as your

¹ E.g., H. Heras, "Aśoka's Dharma and Religion," Fourth Oriental Conference, 1926. For contrary views, Bühler, *Ind. Ant.*, VII, p. 141; V. A. Smith, *Aśoka*, 35-39; F. W. Thomas, *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 504. See also Fleet, *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, pp. 491-92.

² For Aśoka's visit to Buddhist sacred places, *Rock Edict VIII*.

district (extends), dispatch ye (an officer) according to the letter of this edict. In the same way cause (your subordinates) to dispatch (an officer) according to the letter of this (edict) in all the territories surrounding forts." Elsewhere in the Caloutta-Bairat Rock Inscription he offers friendly advice and guidance to his co-religionists. "The Māgadha king salutes the Saṃgha and hopes they are well and comfortable . . . Whatever has been spoken by the Buddha has been well-spoken. But, sirs, what would indeed appear to me, 'thus the true Dhamma will be of long duration,' that I feel bound to declare. The following expositions of the Dhamma, sirs, *viz.*, (1) the Vinaya Samukasa, (2) the Aliyavasas, (3) the Anāgata-bhayas, (4) Munigāthās, (5) the Moneya Sāta, (6) Upatisa-pasina, and (7) the Lāghulovāda which was spoken by the blessed Buddha concerning falsehood,—I desire, sirs, that many groups of monks and (many) nuns may repeatedly listen to these expositions of the Dhamma and may reflect on them." Laymen and laywomen should do the same. In the Brahmagiri Rock Inscription, issued in the course of a tour, the emperor declares that he had not been zealous for a year but that after visiting the Saṃgha, he had become very zealous. It will be too much to infer from this that Aśoka became a monk, though there are Pāli traditions to that effect, but it is apparent that Aśoka was on intimate terms with the Buddhist monastic order. A Burmese Inscription at Bodh-Gayā of the thirteenth century A.D. credits Aśoka with the erection of 84,000 Caityas.¹ In the paternal attitude, the moral and spiritual leadership of the people at large, in the wide tolerance coupled with zeal for his own persuasion, which Aśoka adopted, there was nothing original in idea. All this had been preached before him or was being preached during his epoch. As incidental passages in his

¹ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 10.

own testament indicate, something had been done by his predecessors to translate the ideal into practice. All the same the Aśokan state is of first-rate importance in the study of Hindu institutions. Amidst the surrounding twilight, it is lighted up by its own glorious bequest and displays its features so clearly. It represents, in a concrete form, the ideal which a Hindu state at its best aspired to attain. It shows more than anything else, that in ancient India the state recognised no limits to its activities; it would regulate everything. It concerned itself as much with the material as with the higher interests of its subjects. It is a culture-state. Under Aśoka it is a missionary state. Aśoka, as is well-known, dispatched missionaries beyond his dominions.¹

Of the institutions through which the power of the state was exercised, the Aśokan edicts do not say much.

But they make it clear that the king was the central and most important institution.

The king. He thought and planned and advised; he exhorted and guided his officers incessantly. He toured incessantly. Other kings had indulged in vihāra-yātrās, pleasure or hunting tours but he had converted them into Dhamma-yātrās or spiritual tours.² He styled himself Rāja. The grandiloquent titles which occur in later inscriptions had not yet come into fashion. Though supreme over the whole of North India and the Deccan, he was primarily the king of Magadha. As such he styles himself in the Calcutta-Bairat Rock Inscription. He has a personal designation of his own, signifying 'king,' beloved of the gods and of affectionate vision³—Devānāmpriya Priyadarśi Rāja, or briefly Devānāmpriya Priyadarśi, Priyadarśi Rāja, Devānāmpriya Rāja or Devānāmpriya, as he variously styles himself. It was, perhaps, something like a dynastic appellation. One of the Ceylonese

¹ Rock Edicts II, V, XIII; *Dīpavaṃśa*, VIII; *Mahāvamśa*, XII.

² Rock Edict VIII.

Chronicles calls Candragupta Maurya Piyadassin. Daśaratha, probably a descendant of Aśoka, is called Devānāmpriya, in the Nāgārjuni Hill Cave Inscription.¹ The capital of Aśoka continued to be Pāṭaliputra but he transacted the business of the state wherever he happened to be (Rock Edict VI). The king maintained a huge establishment. The mention of Kāruvāki as the *second* queen shows that in the harem the grade of queens was fixed. The king's brothers and sons, as the mention of their charities proves, lived in effulgence at Pāṭaliputra and other towns and were often associated in the task of administration.² Rock Edict I implies that before his conversion to the Dhamma, hundreds of animals were slaughtered daily in the royal kitchen. This means a huge palace and court establishment though it is probable that part of the meat was distributed free to people. The king seems to have moved about in palanquins.³ In Pillar Edict V, there is an interesting reference to Nāgavana, the elephant-park of the king.

Aśoka seems to have had a chief minister called Amātya in the Divyāvadāna. The kingdom was divided into a number of provinces, some of which, perhaps the more important ones, were governed by princes of the blood. The Inscriptions refer to four of the provinces: (1) Ujjayini in Central India, (2) Takṣaśilā in the North-west, (3) Kalinga or Orissā with

¹ The Dīpavaṃśa (XI, 14, 19, 20, 25) calls the Ceylonese ruler Tissa Devānāmpriya. A Ceylonese inscription applies the designation to other kings. For the Nāgārjuni Hill Cave Inscription, Ind. Ant., XX, 364 et seq. Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita in his Siddhānta Kaumudī and Hemacandra in his Abhidhānacintāmaṇi take Devānāmpriya to signify a 'fool' or 'dunce,' but that meaning was obviously unknown in the time of Aśoka. See D. R. Bhandarkar, Aśoka, pp. 5-7; J. R. A. S., 1908, pp. 482-83. The name of Aśoka occurs only in the edict recently discovered at Maski in the Raichur district of Hyderabad-Deccan (Hyderabad Archaeological Series, No. 1, 1915).

² Pillar Edict VII.

³ Rock Edict VI.

its capital at Tosali and (4) Suvarṇagiri probably in the south. From the fact that these were administered by princes and that Aśoka himself had been a provincial governor before his accession to the throne, it may be inferred that royal governors were the rule. The testimony of literature points to the same conclusion. Aśoka's kingdom might have comprised other provinces. For instance, the Jānāgaḍh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman seems to show that in Aśoka's time Gīrnār was governed by a Yavana potentate Tushāspa. He was probably a Greek by origin who adopted a Persian name and sought service under the Mauryas.¹ It appears that, as a general rule, the province in which the capital was situated, was governed directly by the king. The practice of appointing prince-viceeroys could not be free from danger. But, on the whole, it seems to have worked well. At any rate, it warded off the ever-present risk of provincial assertion of independence, so long as the central authority was strong enough.

The king as well as the provincial governors seem to have had advisory boards called *Paṛiśads*, which deliberated on all affairs of state, which acted as a link between the highest officers and the general body of royal servants, and which helped the latter in the discharge of their duties. The *Paṛiśads* seem to have been composed of the higher administrative officers. Their numerical strength is not stated. It will appear that the constitution of these boards represented a further application of the principle which lay at the foundation of the military and urban boards described by Megasthenes. It seems that the *Paṛiśad* freely debated on all questions and that members dared to differ not only among themselves but also from the wishes of the king. In the latter contingency, the matter was at once reported

Advisory
Boards.

¹ Ep. Ind., VIII, p. 47.

to the king whose word would, of course, be ultimately decisive. "When," says the king in Rock Edict VI, "in respect of anything that I personally order by word of mouth, for being issued or proclaimed, or again in respect of any emergent work superimposing itself upon the Mahāmātras, there is any division or rejection in the Paṇḍita, I have commanded that it should forthwith be reported to me at all places, and at all hours." The views of the Paṇḍita, as soon as formed, were to be reported to the Emperor by the Prativēdakas. In Rock Edict III, the Paṇḍita is asked to advise and help the Yutas in executing his orders for the promotion of the Dhamma.

Below the viceroys and their advisory boards stood a number of officials divided into various classes. The

edicts mention Mahāmātras, Rājuka or Mahāmātras.

Lājuka, Virutha or Vyūṭha, Yuta and Puruṣa. It is possible that Puruṣa—"a man"—probably an abbreviation of Rājapuruṣa or king's man, at first only meant a king's servant and applied to all government employees. But in the time of Aśoka the term seems to be confined to a particular class of agents—supervisors, reporters or spies. The high officers of the realm were known as Mahāmātras—a term which signifies minister or courtier in the Jātakas. The status of Mahāmātras may be inferred from the Inscriptions. In the Siddhāpur edict, the emperor addresses himself not only to the provincial governor but, through him, also to the Mahāmātras. In the Jaugada separate edict, he wants his commands to be communicated to Mahāmātras. It is important to notice that the emperor kept himself in touch with the highest officers throughout the realm. In the Third Rock Edict certain Mahāmātras are called Prādeśikas, a term which seems to signify district officers.¹ It appears that a

¹ The Prādeśikas are identified with the Pradeśī of the Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra by F. W. Thomas (J. R. A. S., 1914, pp. 383 et seq.; Ibid., 1915, p. 112).

province was divided into a number of districts each under a *Prādesika*. In the *Dhauḷi* and *Jaugada* separate edicts the term *Mahāmātras* is applied also to *Nagaravyavahārikas*, probably judicial officers in towns. This indication supplements the evidence of *Megasthenes* and corroborates his general observation that towns had an administrative machinery of their own.¹ The application of the term *Mahāmātra* to various classes of high functionaries indicates a supreme civil service of the kingdom, which guided the day-to-day administration and from which all important officers were recruited. When *Aśoka* started censorial and missionary activities, his *Dhamma-Mahāmātras* were chosen from the same ranks or assimilated to them.

Next to the *Mahāmātras* in rank stood the *Rājukas* or *Lājukas*. The derivation of the term implies that the

Rājukas were fiscal officers but in the

Edicts of Aśoka they perform judicial functions. As no other distinct revenue officials are mentioned, it is probable that the *Rājukas* combined both revenue and judicial functions, an arrangement which was known to Medieval India and still obtains. To the *Rājukas* or *Lājukas* the king could communicate his commands directly or through his agents, possibly *Mahāmātras*. As he puts it in the *Fourth Pillar Edict, Delhi-Topra*, "the *Lājukas* also must obey me. They will also obey the agents who know (my) wishes. And these (agents) will also exhort those (people) in order that the *Lājukas* may be able to please me." While their subordination is clear, they seem to have enjoyed wide authority. The *Dhauḷi* and *Jaugada*

¹ A terra-cotta seal discovered at *Bhiṭṭā* near *Allāhābād* bears, in characters of the 4th or 3rd century B.C., the legend *Sahijitye Nigamasa* (*Marshall, Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind., 1911-12, p. 31*). As *D. R. Bhandarkar* has shown, *Nigama* can only refer to towns, not to guilds as some scholars thought. It is probable that towns early had seals of their own.

Edicts show Mahāmātras exercising judicial functions in cities but the brunt of the judicial work seems to have fallen on the Lājukas. "My Lājukas," says the king, "are occupied with the people, with many hundred thousands of men. I have ordered that either rewards or punishments are left to their discretion, in order that the Lājukas should perform their duties confidently (and) fearlessly, that they should bestow welfare and happiness on the people of the country and that they should confer benefits on (them)." To their care he entrusted the people as a parent entrusts a child to an intelligent nurse. On them he enjoined that "there should be both impartiality in judicial proceedings and impartiality in punishments."¹ In

Justice,
the First Separate Rock Edict, Dhauli, he expatiates on judicial fairness and impartiality at greater length. He wants the judges to follow not merely a part but the whole of his injunctions on the subject. "It happens in the administration (of justice) that a single person suffers either imprisonment or harsh treatment. In this case you must strive to deal (with all of them) impartially. But one fails to act thus on account of the following dispositions: envy, anger, cruelty, hurry, want of practice, laziness (and) fatigue. You must strive for this that these dispositions may not arise to you. And at the root of all this is the absence of anger and the avoidance of hurry. He who is fatigued in the administration (of justice) will not rise; but one ought to move, to walk and to advance. He who will pay attention to this must tell you: 'see that (you) discharge the debt (which you owe to the king); such is the instruction of Devānāmpriya' . . . If (you) observe this, you will attain heaven, and you will discharge the debt which you owe to me." Thrice a year or more frequently, this edict was to be studied by the officers

¹ Pillar Edict IV, Delhi-Topra.

concerned. But to ensure its observance the king arranged the quinquennial or more frequent tours of Mahâmâtras—a sort of inspectors of courts, sent from the central and provincial capitals. “I shall send out every five years (a Mahâmâtra) who will be neither harsh nor fierce (but) of gentle actions (in order to ascertain) whether (the judicial officers), paying attention to this object... are acting thus, as my instruction (implies). But from Ujjayini also the prince (governor) will send out for the same purpose... a person of the same description, and he will not allow (more than) three years to pass (without such a deputation). In the same way (an officer will be deputed from Takṣaśilâ also.” From the last clause of the edict it will appear that some other duties were also entrusted to these inspectors but all along the emphasis is laid on judicial supervision. Aśoka made a gracious reform in the

penal law. “A respite of three days is granted by me to persons lying in prison on whom punishment has been passed (and) who have been condemned to death. (In this way) either (their) relatives will persuade those (Lājukas) to (grant) their life, or, if there is none who persuades (them), they will bestow gifts, or will undergo fasts in order to (attain happiness) in the other world. For my desire is that when the time (of respite) has expired, they should attain (happiness) in the other world.”¹ So, Aśoka aimed at giving the unfortunate condemned men an adequate interval for petitions for mercy and spiritual preparation for the life beyond. None the less justice was to be strict and impartial. Aśoka’s reputation for justice lasted through centuries. In the seventh century A.D. Yuan Chwang recorded the tradition that on the representation of the

¹ Pillar Edict IV, Delhi-Topra.

ministers and aged officers, Aśoka sentenced his "extravagant, wasteful and cruel brother" Mahendra to death.¹

Besides death, imprisonment was a regular form of punishment under the Mauryas. In the Fifth Pillar Edict,

Imprisonment. Aśoka says that within twenty-six years after his Abhiṣeka he had granted

amnesty to prisoners twenty-five times. Probably the amnesty was granted regularly on the anniversary of the coronation. As this was the practice of Aśoka even before his conversion to Buddhism, he was, perhaps, only following a time-honoured custom. Rock Edict V, and the First Separate Rock Edict, Dhauli, also testify to the king's concern for prisoners. The aged ones might be released, the infirm might be freed from shackles. In certain cases, the families of prisoners might be provided for. There was, however, a tradition long current in India that, in the early days of Aśoka, prison-life was a veritable hell. Yuan Chwang heard that shortly after his accession Aśoka built a prison enclosed by high walls, with a lofty tower at each corner, full of indescribable terrors and tortures. It was headed by a fierce wicked man. Later, it was demolished.²

Below the Mahāmātras and the Lājukas stood the Yutas, etc. Yutas who worked in government offices, codified the royal commands and performed other secretarial duties. Rock Edict III requires the Paṇḍit to order the Yutas to register (these rules) both with (the addition of) reasons and according to the letter.³ It seems that Yutas, too, were appointed for definite territorial areas. The Third Rock Edict requires all the Prādesīkas, Lājukas and Yutas to undertake quinquennial

¹ Beal, Si-yu-ki, II, p. 91.

² Watters, On Yuan Chwang, II, p. 88.

³ As F. W. Thomas pointed out, the Yutas of Aśoka correspond to the Yuktas of the Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra (J. R. A. S., 1909, pp. 466-7; Ibid., 1914, pp. 387-91).

tours, inspect the whole of their charge and transact administrative business as well as promote Dhamma. Viruthas or Vyūthas also toured on business of state but their duties are not clear.¹ Besides Yutas there were a number of clerks, Lipikāras, who are mentioned in Rock Edict XIV. To departments of government were attached a number of Dātas or messengers whose duties are obvious.²

Alongside these officers stood the Puruṣas—'men,'
 Puruṣas. that is, king's men, his agents—acting
 as spies, reporters and supervisors. They
 were acquainted with the king's wishes; they are said
 to control the Lājukas (Pillar Edict IV), and to be "placed
 in charge of many people" (Pillar Edict VII). There were
 three ranks of them—high, middle and low (Pillar Edict I).
 Aśoka created another similar class of agents, called
 Prativedakas, who were placed everywhere, as he says,
 "in order to report to me the affairs of the people at any
 time, while I am eating, in the harem, in the inner apart-
 ment, even at the cowpen, in the palanquin and in the
 parks."³

Into Aśoka's fiscal system, the Rumindei Pillar
 Revenue. Inscription affords just a passing glimpse.
 He made the village of Lummini free of
 taxes and required it to pay only an eighth share of the
 produce. It seems that every village besides paying
 a share of the gross produce had to pay other taxes as
 well, a surmise which is fully borne out by later evidence.
 If Aśoka is reducing the land revenue from Lummini
 to one-eighth of the gross produce, it may be inferred that
 the usual rate was higher. It might have been in the neigh-
 bourhood of the Hindu traditional one-sixth. A later notice
 in the Samantapāsādikā shows that customs yielded a big
 amount. Aśoka's daily income from the four gates of the

¹ Pillar Edict VII; Rūpanāth Edict.

² Rock Edict XIII.

³ Rock Edict VI, Gīrnār.

city of Pāṭaliputra seems to have been 4,00,000 kahāpaṇas. It is also said that he used to get 1,00,000 kahāpaṇas daily in the Sabhā but this is difficult of interpretation. It may mean revenue from other sources.¹

For the rest the institutions of Aśoka may be presumed to be similar to those noticed by Megasthenes. The Divyāvadāna has preserved a tradition that Aśoka's 'waste' of treasure on religion at length forced his ministers to depose him and instal his grandson Samprati on the throne.² It is impossible to verify the statement but it is possible that the dedication of the resources of the state to ecclesiastical interests provoked some discontent in political circles.

¹ Samantapāsādikā, I, 52.

² Divyāvadāna, p. 884. See also Tārānātha, (tr. Schiefner), p. 287.

CHAPTER IX.

After the Mauryan Empire.

After Aśoka Indian history enters on a comparatively dark period of five centuries. The Mauryan empire which was never a unitary state soon dissolved into its constituent fragments. The history of the independent kingdoms and confederations which arose is lighted up only by some isolated inscriptions, coins and literary records. A long series of Greek and Scythian invasions from the North-west, which met with varying measures of temporary success, makes the confusion worse confounded and defeats all attempts at the reconstruction of history. Owing to the meagreness of authenticated political facts, no connected account of political institutions in any region at any time during this period is possible. Only a few facts can be gleaned about the activities and institutions of state. The re-appearance of Mauryan institutions in a more developed form under the Guptas and their elaboration in the Smṛitis and the Arthaśāstra suggest that they continued to function with uncertain degrees of efficiency during the interregnum.

The traditional genealogies of the dynastic successors of Aśoka show such divergence that a division of the empire after Samprati has been suggested as a working hypothesis.¹ In the

¹ The Puranic genealogies have been worked out by Pargiter (*Dynasties of the Kali Age*, pp. 27-30). These, along with other data in the *Divyāvadāna*, XXIX, Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, I, 108 et seq., and *Tārānātha*, tr. Schiefner, pp. 48 et seq., are summarised in the *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 511-12. See also V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition, pp. 201-205.

absence of further evidence it is impossible to be sure of it. It is, however, clear that the Mauryas continued to rule at Pāṭaliputra until about 184 B.C. According to the Jaina tradition, Samprati was converted to Jainism and did all he could to further the interests of that faith. So, the tradition of the missionary state continued though the objective of the mission partly changed. Samprati also seems to have continued the tradition of large-hearted religious toleration. Similarly, another of the later Mauryas, Daśaratha, probably a grandson of Aśoka, extended his favours to sects other than his own. He allotted some caves to Ājivakas.¹

About 184 B.C. Brihadratha, the last of the Mauryas, was superseded by his over-mighty commander-in-chief,

Puṣyamitra, the founder of the Śuṅga line.²

The Śuṅgas.

The fact that the Śuṅgas were Brāhmaṇas proves that ambition or the force of events sometimes violated the rule of Kṣatriya kingship and that Brāhmaṇas, not content with advisory functions or influence, occasionally wielded the sceptre. The accession of Puṣyamitra to power was followed by a reversal of the policy of religious toleration which the Mauryas had uniformly pursued. Puṣyamitra seems to have been a champion of militant Brahmanism and a bitter persecutor of Buddhism. He is said to have burnt Buddhist monasteries throughout the Gangetic valley and to have slaughtered or dispersed the monks.³ So, the policy of toleration, though generally observed in ancient India, was occasionally violated with a vengeance. In the days of the Śuṅgas North India was divided into a number of principalities, many

¹ Nāgārjunī Hill Cave Inscriptions, Ep. Ind., VIII; Ind. Ant., XX, 1891, p. 361.

² Pargiter, op. cit., 81, 70. Bāna, Harśacarita, (tr. Cowell and Thomas), p. 193. Jayaswal, J. B. O. R. S., IV, Sep., 1918. Puṣyamitra is also called Puṣpamitra. The former is the more correct of the two (Bühler, Ind. Ant., II, 362).

³ Divyāvadāna, pp. 433-34. Tārānātha tr. Schiefner, p. 81.

of which acknowledged their suzerainty. The coins and inscriptions which bear the name of a Śuṅga as well as another name clearly bring out the feudal relationship. Bhārhut in Central India, Kauśāmbī, Pañcāla and probably Mathurā were among the feudatory states.¹ The Hāthi-gumphā Inscription refers to the frightened "kings" of the Uttarāpatha and supports the same conclusion.² All through this period there are some non-monarchical feudatories in the Puñjāb and modern Rājputānā, such as the Yaudheyas, Ārjunāyanas and Udumbaras. The coins of the first two date from a period as early as the first century B.C.³ The tradition preserved in Kālidāsa that Vasumitra, grandson of Puṣyamitra, was accompanied by a hundred royal princes in his campaigns is another evidence of feudalism.⁴ A Śuṅga inscription says that the Senāpati Puṣyamitra performed two sacrifices.⁵ It appears that the Śuṅga ruler revived the Rājasāya, imposed his suzerainty on surrounding principalities and only then received formal consecration and titles of royalty. The traditions dramatised by Kālidāsa in his Mālavikāgnimitra about the 4th or 5th century A.D. fully accord with epigraphic testimony and prove that until the completion of the sacrifice Puṣyamitra styled himself only Senāpati. He is said to have written to his son, "May it be well with thee! From the sacrificial enclosure the commander-in-chief sends this message to his son Agnimitra, who is in the territory of Vidisā,"⁶ affectionately embracing him.

¹ Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India*, 73, 79, 85—90; Rapson, *Indian Coins*, 11—13; *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 523—27. *Lāder's Inscriptions*, Nos. 687—88.

² *J. B. O. R. S.*, III, p. 464.

³ Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, No. 1; *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 527—30; *J. R. A. S.*, 1897, pp. 886 et seq.

⁴ Kālidāsa, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Act V.

⁵ *J. B. O. R. S.*, Sep., 1924, p. 203.

⁶ Vidisā was governed by Agnimitra, probably as his father's viceroy.

Be it known unto thee that I, having been consecrated for the Râjasûya sacrifice, let loose from all check or curb a horse which was to be brought back after a year, appointing Vasumitra as its defender, girt with a guard of a hundred royal princes. This very horse wandering on the right (or south) bank of the Sindhu was claimed by a cavalry squadron of the Yavanas. Then there was a fierce struggle between the two hosts. Then Vasumitra, the mighty bowman, having overcome his foes, rescued by force my excellent horse which they were endeavouring to carry off. Accordingly, I will now sacrifice, having had my horse brought back to me by my grandson, even as Anumat brought back the horse to Sagara. Therefore you must dismiss anger from your mind, and without delay come with my daughters-in-law to behold the sacrifice."¹ The nine Śuṅgas who followed Puṣyamitra on the throne of Pāṭaliputra and reigned until about 73 B.C. are mere names. Their dominions seem to have diminished considerably in extent.²

Even during the lifetime of Puṣyamitra, the supremacy of the Śuṅgas had been challenged and their very existence

imperilled from more than one quarter.
Kaliṅga.

Kaliṅga had, like Magadha, made a bid for suzerainty. Megasthenes reckoned the Kaliṅga force at 60,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and 700 elephants. Aśoka notes that in the Kaliṅga war 1,00,000 men were slain and 1,50,000 persons carried into slavery. The Kaliṅga power was only repressed, not destroyed. Sometime after Aśoka it threw off the yoke of the Mauryas as it had once thrown off that of the Nandas. Kaliṅga reached the zenith of its glory under the Jaina king Khâravêla, who twice invaded the north, about 165 B.C. and about 161 B.C.,

¹ Kālidāsa, *Mālavikāgnimitra*, Act V, tr. Tawney, p. 78.

² Fargiter, *op. cit.*, 30, 70; V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 214-15; Cambridge History of India, I, 518-22.

threatened Pāṭaliputra, defeated Puṣyamitra, reduced him to vassalage at least for a short time and carried his arms up to the foot of the Himālayas. The Hāthīgumphā Inscription, which commemorates his exploits and achievements year by year and which now ranks among the most important sources of information regarding ancient India, supplies a few details of administrative importance.¹ Kalinga was not yet part of India proper according to the orthodox computation. Khāravela is spoken of as attacking Bhāratavarṣa. Like the Maurya, Khāravela seems to have carried out a census of the population. The inscription puts the population of Kalinga at 3½ millions. Considering the figure along with those of armies of various kings mentioned in history and examining the whole data in the light of modern statistics, the whole of India in ancient times seems to have comprised about 100 millions of souls. The education of a prince in Kalinga comprised a wide course — state correspondence, currency, state-accounting, law and custom, Dharma injunctions and “all the Vidyās (arts).” Khāravela seems also to have been taught music. After his 15th year Khāravela was appointed Yuvarāja and consecrated king in his twenty-fourth year according to the rites of the Mahārāja Abhiṣeka. It is possible that in Kalinga, and it may be, in some other parts of the country, the formal consecration was delayed until years of majority. The king assumed several titles—Aira (probably Ārya), Mahārāja, Mahāmeghavāhana, and Kalingādhipati.² This is the first authentic case of a king assuming lofty titles—titles which became loftier still a few centuries later. The

¹ The Hāthīgumphā Inscription, known since 1825, has only recently been authoritatively edited by K. P. Jayaswal and R. D. Banerji (J.B.O.R.S., Vol. III, 1917, Pt. III, pp. 425–507). See also R. C. Majumdar, *Ind. Ant.*, XLVIII, p. 187; V. A. Smith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1918, p. 548; Fleet, *J. R. A. S.*, 1910, pp. 824 et seq.; Rama Prasad Chanda, *J. R. A. S.*, 1919, pp. 319 et seq.

² Similar titles were assumed by a later Kalinga king (Ep. Ind., XIII, p. 160).

capital was a grand city. Khâravêla repairs its walls, gates and buildings which had been damaged by a storm, rebuilds the reservoirs and restores the gardens. On the banks of the Prâchi the king built a great 'palace of victory' at a cost of 35 laes. At the conclusion of a dazzling campaign, he built towers, with richly-carved interiors, to contain trophies and presents. Like the Mauryas, the Kaliṅga kings attended to the needs of irrigation. Khâravêla extended a canal which the Nandas had excavated three hundred years before. The king was anxious to please his subjects and win their loyalty. Khâravêla entertained the capital by songs, music, dances, theatres, other shows and festivities. One of the interesting celebrations consisted in leading statues of the king's predecessors in procession. His charity was as unstinted as that of the great Mauryan conqueror of his patrimony. The record of the ninth year of his reign mentions his costly gifts. He gave a kalpa tree, a tree of solid gold, with leaves of gold, accompanied by feasts and gifts of elephants, horses, chariots with drivers, to Brâhmanas. The qualification of Brâhmanas shows the toleration and catholicity of the Jaina king's policy. He made special provision for the dwelling of Kṣatriya ascetics. He does something (which the mutilated inscription does not enable us to specify) for the Śramaṇas. Like Aśoka he prides himself on the respect he paid to all sects. Yet he had some enthusiasm for his own faith. He built numerous Jaina temples. He took pains to recover from Magadha the foot-marks of the first Jina which king Nanda had taken away. Khâravêla's army consisted, as usual, of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. In spite of his military activities and glories, Khâravêla calls himself King of Peace and Prosperity, the Dharma King, the Bhikṣu (King). Warfare, in fact, was looked upon as an ordinary incident of kingship and did

not seem to detract from one's claim to be regarded as peaceful.¹

The rise of Kalinga synchronised with that of another power further south. The Āndhras or Andhras, first mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VII, 18, Āndhras. 2 and noticed by the Greeks as a powerful people, with thirty walled towns, and an army of 1,00,000 foot, 2,000 cavalry, and 1,000 elephants, had their centre between the Godāvari and the Kṛṣṇā.² Asoka's Rock Edict, XII, mentions them among the southern borderers. On the death of the great Mauryan emperor, they became independent and, under the Śātavāhana family, rapidly extended their power and measured swords with Kalinga. In about 28 B.C. the Āndhra king extinguished the Kāṇva dynasty of Brahmanic origin, which had supplanted the Śuṅgas at Pāṭaliputra about 73 B.C.³ The Āndhras thus became a northern power and established an empire which, in its extension from north to south and east to west, recalls that of the Mauryas.⁴ The coins which form one of the most valuable sources for the study of the Āndhra dynasties, show that different systems of coinage prevailed in different areas and that the imposition of suzerainty on a region rarely implied the extinction of its old coinage. It indicates that the Āndhra empire was not, any more than its predecessors

¹ For a brief account of Khāravēla's campaigns, Cambridge History of India, I, 535—58.

² Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, Book VI, 21, 22, 23. R. G. Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Deccan*, p. 6. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Ind. Ant.*, 1913, pp. 276—78. Nānāghaṭ Cave Inscriptions, Nos. 1112—20.

³ For the Kāṇva dynasty, Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 71. V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 215—217.

⁴ For the Āndhras, Rapson, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Āndhra Dynasty*, the Western Kṣatrapas, *Traikūṭaka Dynasty and Bodhi Dynasty*; V. A. Smith, *op. cit.* 217—227; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Ind. Ant.*, XLVII, pp. 149 et seq.; *Ibid.*, XLVIII, pp. 77 et seq.; Cambridge History of India, I, 529—85.

or successors, a unitary state; that it left local autonomy more or less undisturbed and that it partook of the nature of a confederation. It is beyond the scope of this work to unravel the tangled skein of Āndhra history which touched the peoples and dynasties of the greater part of India. The fortunes of the Āndhra line vary but it continues in vigour until nearly the end of the second century A.D. and lingers into the latter half of the third century. From the relevant coins and inscriptions, a few facts can be gleaned about the system of administration. The Āndhra Śātavāhana kings generally assumed the surname Śātakarṇi which became a dynastic appellation. An inscription of Yajñaśrī Gautamiputra calls him only Rāja.¹ The high titles of the Gupta period were not yet in vogue. Queen Nāganikā's Nānāghāt Inscription² shows the Āndhra king Śātakarṇi allied by marriage to the Marāṭhā king of Rāṣṭrikas about the second century B. C. It proves that a woman, though she could not ascend the throne, could act as regent. Another inscription shows that Gautamiputra associated the queen-mother in his administration.³ The Nānāghāt Inscription records the performance of certain great sacrifices in the course of which the priests received large numbers of elephants, thousands of horses, tens of thousands of cows, whole villages and tens of thousands of Kārṣāpapas. Twice did Śātakarṇi perform the Aśvamedha sacrifice.⁴ Records of this nature indicate that the revival of Brahmanism was aided by rulers. None the less the Āndhra kings were generally true to the Hindu tradition of toleration for all sects.⁵

¹ Ep. Ind., I, No. 15.

² Lüders, No. 1112.

³ Arch. Surv. West. Ind., IV, p. 105. Ep. Ind., VII, p. 73.

⁴ Ind. Ant., XLVIII, p. 77. Arch. Surv. West. Ind., p. 60. R. G. Bhandarkar, J. B. B. R. A. S., XIII, 1877, p. 311.

⁵ For the grant of a village to monks, Karle Inscription, Ep. Ind., VII, p. 57. See also Ep. Ind., VII, pp. 61, 64; VIII, pp. 60, 65, 71, 82, 94. Arch. Surv. West. Ind., IV, 102, 104, 107, 108, 110, 112, 114.

The cumulative evidence of coins and inscriptions brings out the existence of a ruling class which occupied a two-fold position. Aristocrats, styled

The Ruling Class. Mahārathis, Mahābhōjas and Mahāsenā-

patis, are clearly high officers of state at the capital, provincial or district governors. Elsewhere they appear to be feudal lords striking their own coins and making grants of land on their own authority. The line between direct employees of state and vassals is rather faint. Perhaps there never was a clear demarcation. One class faded insensibly into the other. The tendency to the hereditary transmission of office would bring the status of governors nearer that of feudal chiefs. The system of payment in land was another powerful factor in the same direction. An inscription of Siri Pulumāvi of the second century A.D. shows military officers holding large fiefs of land.¹ Marriage alliance between the royal and aristocratic families would tend to produce the same result.² Polygamy, always practised by aristocrats in ancient India, would accelerate the conversion of the whole aristocracy into a sort of clan. The government of the state would tend to become government by the clan. It is clear that there were numerous local dynasties under the Āndhra kings. Feudatories assumed titles like those of Cuṭukaḍānanda, Joy of the city of the Cuṭus and Muḍānanda, Joy of the Muṇḍas. In the inscriptions there occur a number of dignitaries, Amātyas, Mahāmātras and Bhaṇḍāgārikas, who correspond to officers with similar designations in other inscriptions and in literature. They acted as ministers, treasurers and heads of departments at the central, provincial or feudal capitals. There

¹ Ep. Ind., XIV, No. 9.

² E.g., Arch. Surv. West. Ind., IV, p. 99. Ep. Ind., VIII, p. 91.

was a regular secretarial staff, comprising Lekhakas or clerks.¹

The numismatic and epigraphic materials at our disposal do not permit a fuller picture of institutions, but the literary works dating from the second century A.D. or earlier, show that there existed an elaborate administrative system.² There is, however, one important conclusion to which the inscriptions lead, *viz.*, that the state, whether in its suzerain or feudal aspects was not the only form of regulation. Industry had organised itself on the principle of guilds. The Nâsik and Junnar Inscriptions prove the existence of guilds of potters, weavers, braziers, bamboo-workers, artisans, corn-dealers, etc., etc. Guilds acted as banks, receiving deposits at stipulated rates of interest. Their honesty and durability inspired sufficient confidence to induce rulers and others to entrust permanent endowments with them. They were not altogether unconnected with the administrative machinery of the state. Deposits and endowments were sometimes registered in the hall of the town.³

The history of North India was influenced during this period not merely by the exploits of the Ândhras but also by events outside India. The movements of the Central Asian Hiungnu and the rise of Parthia were factors of capital importance in the politics of the Middle East and therefore of North India. Parthia cut the Indo-Greeks from the West and, as their coins indicate, forced them to lose their individuality in the midst of Indian conditions. From the close of the

¹ Rapson, J. R. A. S., 1903, p. 299; Rapson, Catalogue of the Coins of the Ândhra Dynasty, etc.; D. R. Bhandarkar, Ind. Ant., XLVII, pp. 69 et seq.; R. G. Bhandarkar, Early History of the Deccan.

² *Infra*, Ch. X.

³ Ep. Ind., VIII, 82-88; X, App., p. 132, Liters, No. 1133, 1137, 1165, 1180.

third century B.C. to the first century A.D. various Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian dynasties ruled in the west of India but their history is obscure and little can be ascertained about their institutions. An interesting document is the Taxila Plate of Patika which belongs to about the close of the second century B.C. It applies the title *Mahārāya*—great king—to Moga whom Cunningham identified with the Moa or Mauos of the coins. So, *Mahārāya*, corresponding to *Mahārāja*, was the title of kings at the time in that region. Under the king Patika governed two provinces as satrap. A better-known figure of the second century B.C. is Menander, king of the Bactrian Greeks, who had established themselves in modern Afghānistān and the Puñjāb. About 155–53 B.C., Menander annexed the Indus delta, Surāṣṭra or Kāthiāwād and other territories, occupied Mathurā on the Jumná and carried his arms up to Pāṭaliputra. He was driven back to the Puñjāb. In spite of the defeat, Bactrian kings continued to hold various districts in the west of India for a long while.¹ Menander is the Milinda of the *Milinda Pañha* and the Tibetan *Tangyur*. His capital Śākala (Siālkot) is described as “a great centre of trade, . . . situated in a delightful country, abounding in parks and gardens and groves and lakes and tanks, a paradise of rivers and mountains and woods.”² The position of Menander in Buddhist literature and the evidence of coins indicate that the Greeks or Bactrians were rapidly absorbed into the Hindu system. If they had any peculiar political institutions, they perished with their individuality.

¹ V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 210, 227–29, 233–62. On the successors of Alexander the Great, *Cambridge History of India*, I, pp. 540–62. For Bactria, Bevan, *House of Seleucus*. For Parthia, Rawlinson, *Sixth Oriental Monarchy*. For Indo-Parthian Coins, *Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum*, pp. 85–62. For some surmises about Indo-Greek kings and viceroys on the basis of numismatic evidence, F.W. Thomas, *J.R.A.S.*, 1906, p. 216. For the Taxila Plate of Patika, *Ep. Ind.*, IV, No. 5.

² *Milinda-Pañha* (tr. Rhys Davids, *S. B. E.*, XXXV), p. 2,

About the first century A.D. other foreign dynasties ruled in the western regions of India. Bhāmaka Kṣahārāta

The Satraps of
Surāṣṭra.

and, some time after him, Nahapāna who assumed the titles Mahākṣatrapa and Rāja exercised sway over southern Rājputānā, Surāṣṭra and some other districts. The line continued until about 119 A.D., when it was extinguished by the Āndhra king Gautamīputra Śrī Śātakarṇi, who annexed its whole territory.¹ It is interesting that the foreigners did not take long to adopt the Hindu title of Rāja. Their other title Kṣatrapa is the Sanskritised form of the old Persian Khshathrapāvan, 'protector of the land.' Hindu literature never recognised it but it has been traced on coins and inscriptions from the second century B.C. onwards. The emergence of a new title Mahākṣatrapa which corresponds to the Hindu Mahārāja indicates an adaptation to Indian conditions. Rudradāman I is said to have won the title Mahākṣatrapa for himself. The Jūnāgaḍh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman records that he deposed and reinstated many Rājas.² It appears that the assumption of the higher title was the symbol of the recognition of suzerainty. For a while the title Mahākṣatrapa is in abeyance, according to numismatic testimony.³ Possibly, the suzerainty of the rulers had been destroyed and they had been reduced to vassalage. The rule of Kṣatrapas and Mahākṣatrapas seems to form part of the federal-feudal conditions which obtained in India. The Jūnāgaḍh Rock

¹ V. A. Smith, op. cit., pp. 220-21.

² For the inscription, Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 6; Ind. Ant., VII, p. 257; Arch. Surv. West Ind., II, p. 128.

³ Rapson, Coins, etc., CXXI-CXXII. The distinction between the titles Rāja Mahākṣatrapa and Mahārāja Kṣatrapa is not clear. An Inscription of 180 A.D. (Ind. Ant., X, p. 157) brings to view two hereditary titles, Mahākṣatrapa and Senāpati. See also Ind. Ant., XIV, p. 325.

Inscription is valuable also for some administrative details.

Administra-
tion.

The highest officials of the Mahākṣatrapa seem to be divided into Matisacivas, counsellors or ministers on the one hand and Karmasacivas or executive officers on the other hand. Amātya seems to be a general designation of high officers. One of the Amātyas is a local governor. Amaca, another form of the same term, is the designation in the Nāsik Cave Inscriptions.¹ The Jânâgaḍh Inscription shows that ministers sometimes dared to differ strongly from their master. When the dam of the lake Sudarśana burst, the ministers did not approve of the monarch's plan to get it repaired. The breach, they held, was too enormous and the expense would be ruinous. The people clamoured in despair. Rudradāman then elected to spend a huge sum of money out of his own private fortune and reconstructed the dam thrice as strong both in length and breadth. The Mahākṣatrapa prides himself on having accomplished the undertaking without resort to additional taxation and forced labour. Incidentally, it appears that new taxes were often imposed and forced labour exacted for public works. None the less, the care for irrigation is remarkable. An inscription of Rudrasena I also seems to commemorate the construction of a tank.² The Nāsik Cave Inscriptions prove that the state levied numerous taxes. Besides, the digging for salt, unless alienated, was a royal monopoly. The visitations of the police were unwelcome to the people, perhaps because they meant some financial exaction. A village, granted for charitable purposes, is to be free from the presence of policemen and the interference of district officers. On the other hand, kings and his relations often displayed unstinted generosity. Uṣavadāta, son-in-law

¹ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 8.

² Ind. Ant., XII, 1883, p. 32. Arch. Surv. West. Ind., II, p. 15. J. B. B. R. A. S., VIII, p. 234.

of Nahapāna, gave sixteen villages to gods and Brāhmanas, fed 1,00,000 Brāhmanas all the year round, built four quadrangular rest-houses, constructed wells, tanks and gardens, established free ferries at many places, founded water-places, halls for meeting, etc. The tradition of religious toleration was maintained. Uṣavadāta dedicated the village of Karajika to the support of all ascetics, "without any distinction of sect or origin" who might keep the Varṣa at the caves at Valūraka. He is said to have given 32,000 stems of coconut trees at a village to the congregation of Carakas. It is interesting to note that the money set apart for the cave of ascetics was invested in the guilds at Govardhana—2,000 in a weavers' guild and 1,000 in another weavers' guild.¹

Another line of Śaka Kṣatrapas ruled in Mālwa with its capital at Ujjayini in the first and second centuries A.D.

Other satraps. They had to adjust themselves into the network of the relationships of suzerainty and vassalage which extended over the greater part of the country. The satrap Caṣṭana (c. 80—c. 110 A.D.) probably acknowledged the suzerainty of the Kuṣāns in the north. One of his successors, Rudradāman, warred with his father-in-law, the Āndhra king, suffered a defeat at his hands but got back from him most of the old Kṣaharāṭa territory.² From coins and inscriptions it appears that Kapiśa, Taxila, and Mathurā were also centres of satrapal government.³ The foreign origin of some of these rulers is undoubted but all foreigners were being

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 7; VIII, No. 8.

² V. A. Smith, op. cit., 222-23; D. R. Bhandarkar, Kṣatrapa Coins from Sarvania, Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1913-14, pp. 227-45. See also Western Kṣatrapas by Bhagvân Lâl Indrâjî, ed. E. J. Rapson.

³ Cunningham, Coins of Ancient India, p. 85; Numismatic Chronicle, 1889, p. 308; F. W. Thomas, Ep. Ind., IX, p. 139; Bühler, Ep. Ind., V, p. 54. See also, J. R. A. S., 1894, p. 541.; Ibid. 1905, p. 784.

assimilated, culturally as well as politically, into the Hindu system. The coins of Indo-Scythian kings give Hindu as well as Greek titles. Azes is styled Mahārāja Rājamahata as well as Basileos Basileon Megalon. Gondophares, who seems to have made himself master of the country from Sindh to Arachosia in the second century A.D., has a type of coin on the reverse of which appears Śiva holding a trident. It may be noted in passing that in some of these coins the king and the heir-apparent have the same titles, while in those of the satraps, the king is designated Mahākṣatrapa and the heir-apparent Kṣatrapa.¹

Perhaps the most remarkable of all foreign dynasties which established themselves in India during this period was that of the Kuṣāns, which belonged to the Yüe-chi. The rise of the Yüe-chi to power in the north of India led to the fall of the Indo-Parthian principalities. The Yüe-chi king Kadphises I (c. 40 A.D.—c. 78 A.D.) ruled a large area from the borders of Persia to the banks of the Indus or the Jhelam. His son who has been called Kadphises II reigned from about 78 A.D. to about 110 A.D., probably conquered the Puñjāb and part of the Gangetic plains up to Benâres and probably annexed the whole of the lower Indus valley. "The conquered Indian provinces were administered by military viceroys, to whom should be attributed the large issues of coins known to numismatics as those of the Nameless king." He maintained diplomatic relations with China and was probably responsible for the Indian embassy which offered its congratulations to Trajan in 99 A.D. He was succeeded by Kaniṣka, one of the great figures of Buddhist history. The date of his accession

¹ Percy Gardner, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, VIII, p. 104; R. B. Whitehead, *Catalogue of Coins in the Puñjāb Museum, Lāhore*, Vol. I, pp. 151-52.

has long been a matter of acute controversy. Most probably it falls in the first half of the second century A.D.¹ The kings of this dynasty adopted the title of Mahārāja which occurs in some inscriptions of Kanishka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva,² and sometimes styled themselves Mahārāja Rājātirāja as in their inscriptions of the years 11, 47, and 87.³ Some early Brāhmi Inscriptions apply the title Mahārāja Devaputra to Kanishka.⁴ After the additions made by Kanishka, the empire included a large part of North-western regions of India as well as parts of Central Asia. The complex interaction of Hindu, Zoroastrian, Gnostic and Hellenic elements was responsible for some new developments in Mahāyāna Buddhism and Gandhāra sculpture. Under Kanishka the foreign state caught up with the Aśokan tradition and stood forth as a culture state. During his latter days Kanishka adorned his capital Puruṣapur, modern Peshāwar, with a "great relic tower which seems to have deserved to rank among the wonders of the world. The superstructure of carved wood

¹ On the whole subject, V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 263—292; Rapson, *Scythian and Parthian Invaders*, *Cambridge History of India*, I, 563—92; R. D. Banerji, *Scythian Period of Indian History*, *Ind. Ant.*, 1908, pp. 25—75; J. A. B. S., *New Series*, 1908, pp. 81 et seq.; K. P. Jayaswal, 'Statue of Wema Kadphises and Kushān Chronology'; J. B. O. R. S., V, p. 511; *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 12—22. Fleet, in various papers, *J. R. A. S.*, 1903, 1905, 1906, 1913, places Kanishka in the first century A.D. R. C. Majumdar, (*Journal of the Department of Letters*, Vol. I, 1920, pp. 65 et seq.) places Kanishka after 214 A.D. For fascinating but inconclusive debates on the Kanishka question, *J. R. A. S.*, 1913, pp. 627—50, 911—1042.

² *Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv.*, III, Nos. 4, 9, 16, pp. 31, 32, 34. Lüders, *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 645.

³ *Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv.*, III, Nos. 12, 18, pp. 33, 35. *Ind. Ant.*, X, 326.

⁴ *Ep. Ind.*, IX, No. 33.

For a statue of Kanishka, J. Ph. Vogel, *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 39 et seq.

rose in thirteen storeys to a height of at least 400 feet, surmounted by a mighty iron-pinnacle . . . A monastery of exceptional magnificence which stood by its side was still flourishing as a place of Buddhist education in the ninth century."¹ According to the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, China and Mongolia, Kaniska held a great Buddhist council in Kuṣṭhalavana near the capital of Kashmir. He is said to have renewed Aśoka's donation of the kingdom of Kashmir to the Buddhist Church.² Though a patron of Buddhism, Kaniska was somewhat of an eclectic. In any case, he recognised and favoured other sects as well. On some of his coins appears the figure of Śiva.³ Similar eclecticism is apparent from the coins of Wema Kadphises, Huviška and Vāsudeva.⁴ The Hindu name of the last king is significant. The Māṇikiāla Inscription which designates Kaniska as a Mahārāja brings a few government officials into view. The Daḍanayago may be a general but is more probably a judicial officer. The Navakarmiga is the superintendent of buildings. The Vihāra-karavhaena is the architect of Vihāras.⁵

¹ Song-yun, *Beal, Si-yu-ki*, I, p. ciii; Yuan Chwang, *ibid*, 99; Watters, I, 204, 208; Alberūnī, tr. Sachau, II, p. 11; for the monastery, Yuan Chwang, *Si-yu-ki*, I, 103; Kielhorn, Ghosrāva Inscription, *Ind. Ant.*, XVII, pp. 307-12. For Kaniska's monasteries for Chinese hostages, *Beal, Si-yu-ki*, I, 56, 173; Watters, *On Yuan Chwang*, I, 203 et seq.

² Yuan Chwang, *Beal*, I, 117, 151; Watters, I, 270-78; I-tsing, *Buddhist Practices*, etc., tr. Takakusu, p. xxi; Tārānātha, tr. Schiefner, p. 58; Takakusu, *J. R. A. S.*, 1904, p. 414; *Eastern Monachism*, p. 188.

³ *British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Greek and Scythian Kings of India*, p. 132; *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, p. 187.

⁴ *British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Greek and Scythian Kings of India*, pp. 124 ff; *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, p. 183.

⁵ *Māṇikiāla Inscription*, Lüders, *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, p. 645.

There is a legend that Kaniṣka, advised by a minister named Māthar, conquered many regions. When he proposed to complete his "universal conquest" by the subjugation of the North, the king's people said, "the king is greedy, cruel and unreasonable; his campaigns and continued conquests have wearied the mass of his servants. He knows not how to be content, but wants to reign over the four quarters. The garrisons are stationed on distant frontiers and our relatives are far from us. Such being the situation, we must agree among ourselves, and get rid of him. After that we may be happy." As he was ill, they covered him with a quilt, a man sat on top of him and the king died on the spot.¹ The death of Kaniṣka occurred probably about 160 A.D. His successors lingered into the third century A.D.

During this period there were some very small principalities, known after cities or districts, which perhaps acknowledged the suzerainty of some potentates but which were autonomous enough to issue coins of their own. Some Taxila coins have on the reverse the legend Nigamā² which can only refer to cities. There are other coins which bear the legend Janapadasa, which refers to districts.³ The Bhaṭṭiprolu Inscriptions show nigamas or towns, grāmas or villages and goṣṭhis or groups enjoying a high degree of autonomy.⁴

¹ Śrī Dharma Piṭaka, tr. Sylvain Lévi, Notes, etc.; Ind. Ant., 1903, p. 388.

² Cunnnigham, Coins of Ancient India, p. 63.

³ Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, 164-65, 179-80; J. R. A. S., 1907, pp. 92-93; Ibid., 1908, pp. 540-41.

⁴ Ep. Ind., II, No. 25.

The Mathurā Jaina Inscription of the year 4 (Liders, No. 48) refers to a lady who was the wife of a village headman and also daughter-in-law of a village headman. It indicates that the office might pass from father to son.

Records of the third and fourth centuries A.D. support the hypothesis of federal-feudalism as the principle of political organisation in ancient India. Sylvain Lévi points out that the Chinese account of an embassy to Siam in the third century A.D. describes *Murundarāja* of India as a powerful monarch whose suzerainty was acknowledged by distant kingdoms. His capital might have been somewhere in Eastern India. The *Allāhābād* Inscription of *Samudragupta* mentions *Daivaputra*, *Śāhi*, and *Śāhānuśāhi* as the titles of the chiefs and kings subjugated by the Gupta king. *Śāhānuśāhi* is the Iranian title of suzerain and corresponds to the Hindu *Mahārājādhirāja* of the Gupta epoch as *Śāhi* corresponds to *Rāja* or *Mahārāja*.

The best traditions of Kushān rule are perhaps reflected in the writings of *Aśvaghoṣa*, one of the greatest figures in the Sanskrit Literature of Buddhism. Sprung from a *Brāhmaṇa* family,

he was a master of Sanskrit learning. According to tradition, he was carried off by *Kaṇiṣka* from *Pāṭaliputra* to adorn his court at *Puruṣapur*. At any rate, the two were contemporaries. As Sylvain Lévi puts it, *Aśvaghoṣa's Sutrālaṅkāra*, along with his *Buddhacarita*, constitutes the first chronological land-mark in the literary history of India. He is probably the forerunner of *Kālidāsa* and stands at the head of classical Sanskrit literature.¹ According to *Tārānātha*, he is identical with the author *Mātrīcētā*. In his *Saundara Nandam Kāvya*, *Aśvaghoṣa* testifies to the supreme need, the indispensability, of the kingship.

¹ For the beginnings of Classical Sanskrit Literature, Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 318-324. Keith, *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, 7-21. Sylvain Lévi (tr.) *Indian Antiquary*, XXXIII et seq. G. K. Nariman, *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*. The theories of Max Müller and R. G. Bhandarkar on the Sanskrit Renaissance in the 4th, 5th or 6th century A.D. are exploded by the discovery of the works of *Aśvaghoṣa* and *Bhāsa* and the epigraphic researches of Fleet, Bühler and others.

But the sceptre is always to be wielded for the sake of virtue and not for the sake of selfish gratification. The king should be the guide and teacher of his subjects.¹ Here is a possible reference to Kaniṣka's policy. In the *Buddhacarita* too, Aśvaghoṣa paints Śuddhodana as the mighty and glorious leader of his people.² "He illumined his people on every side, showing them the paths which they were to follow." Here, too, he emphasises the need of a thorough education for the prince.³ In the *Sutrālakṣaṇa*, a collection of pious legends of the *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* type, Aśvaghoṣa repeats the same ideas and gives an interesting list of the subjects—literary, military, and conventional—which a prince should study. It includes grāmār, writing, rhetoric, eloquence, the *Vedas*, literature, astronomy, medicine, sacrifices; music and song, playing on the tambourine, playing on the conch, dancing and laughter, computation, chess, dice, the science of precious stones and valuable materials for clothing, silk, sealing, weaving, wax work, strategy, sewing, sculpture, painting, arrangement of garlands, interpretation of dreams, interpretation of the flight of birds, reading horoscopes; the training of elephants, domesticating of horses, carrying the lance, jumping, running and fording a river, archery, rules of battle array, strategy, etc. In another work *Vajrasūci*, which is attributed, rather doubtfully, to Aśvaghoṣa, caste is attacked on psychological grounds. All human beings are equal "in respect of joy and sorrow, love, insight, manners and ways, death, fear and life."⁴ Buddhism could never uproot caste but it is probable that under Buddhist regime it had not the same political importance as Brahmanical literature might lead us to suppose.

¹ Aśvaghoṣa, *Saundara Nandam Kāvya*, Canto I, pp. 7-8, Canto II, p. 9.

² *Buddhacarita*, I, 12.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 24; see also I, 14; II, 42, 44.

⁴ G. K. Nariman, *op. cit.*, 36-40, 200-201.

It is during the period reviewed in this chapter that we obtain our first glimpse of the political institutions of the

extreme south. The evidence of literature
The South. shows that the hereditary monarch was surrounded by five assemblies—of the people, priests, physicians, astrologers or augurs and ministers. Their functions are specified.¹ The subject is not altogether free from doubt but it is clear that southern institutions, even in their first-known stages, differed from those of the north. In spite of manifold points of contact and resemblance, the two pursue different lines of development all through history.

¹ V. Kanakasabhai Pillai, *Tāmils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, pp. 119-20.

CHAPTER X.

The Early Dharma Śāstras, the Arthasāstras and other Literature.

The period between the fall of the Mauryas and the supremacy of the Guptas was remarkable for the rise of Smritis or books of traditional law, etc., Arthasāstra, or science of welfare and classical Sanskrit literature. From these literary sources it is possible to glean many administrative details which usefully supplement the meagre information yielded by the coins and inscriptions of the period. Theoretical works have, of course, to be used with the utmost caution and never taken as an exact description of the conditions of any period but, as expositions of ideals and even utopias, they inevitably furnish a peep into the institutions they would improve.

The Smritis or Dharma Śāstras occupy a most important place in the Hindu literature on regulation of life,—on religion, ritual, domestic and social life, law, custom and polity. Unfortunately, it is impossible to ascertain their exact dates. Their origin perplexed even ancient writers. For instance, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa remarks in his *Tantra Vārtika* that owing to the scattering of Śākhās, human error or carelessness and the variety of topics, the beginnings of Smritis could not be traced. The opinions of modern scholars ranged over an extraordinarily long period. Sir William Jones, for instance, referred Manu to 1200 B.C. Later, some scholars brought him down to the twelfth or thirteenth

The value of
theoretical
works.

The Smritis.

century A.D. It is now generally agreed that the Smritis assumed their present shape at various epochs in the first millenium of the Christain Era. R. G. Bhandarkar placed them in the Kuṣān-Gupta period, that is, between the middle of the second and the end of the fifth century A.D.¹ Hopkins refers Manu to the commencement of or even before the Christian era, while he assigns Viṣṇu to the third, Yājñavalkya to the fourth and Nārada to the fifth century A.D.² Jolly thinks that Manu cannot be later than the second or third century A.D. while Viṣṇu cannot be earlier than the third. He would place Yājñavalkya in the fourth and Nārada about the commencement of the sixth century while referring Brihaspati and Kātyāyana to the sixth or seventh century A.D. Bühler, after a searching examination, came to the conclusion that Manusmṛiti existed, pretty much as we know it, in the second century A.D.³ Manu's references to the Kambojas, Yavanas and Śākas bar an earlier date for the work as a whole.

The Smritis, though distinct from Śruti or Revelation, claim to be grounded in Vedic Dharma. In his Jaiminiya Nyāyamālāvistara, Mādhavācārya declares that Smritis are digests collecting and epitomising ordinances which lie scattered in the Vedas. As a matter of fact, they have moved far from the Vedic tradition and only reflect the ideal or positive morality of the various regions in which they arose during the ages following the Dharma Sūtras. Thus Manu belongs to the Gangetic plains, Nārada probably to Nepal, and Yājñavalkya to Mithilā in modern Bihār. The Smritis are

The character
of Smritis.

¹ R. G. Bhandarkar, J. B. B. R. A. S., Vol. XX, No. LVI, p. 356.

² Hopkins, Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 279.

³ Bühler, Introduction to the Laws of Manu, translated with extracts from seven Commentaries. See also the Introduction to A. C. Burnell's translation, entitled 'The Ordinances of Manu.'

attached to different Vedic Schools but the classification of them into Sâtvika, Râjasika and Tâmasika in the Padma Purâṇa is merely fanciful.¹ The discrepancies due to differences of sect, tradition, age and locality perplexed the later writers who were at pains to avoid confusion. The Mimâṃsâ rules, though relating primarily to ritual, were extended to law, and formed a recognised canon of interpretation. That subject was reduced to what is called a Darśana or system of philosophy. The Pârva Mimâṃsâ declares that of two contradictory Smṛiti texts, the one supported by Śruti shall prevail. But it was argued by some that the other text might accord with a Śruti text which had disappeared. The Purva Mimâṃsâ replies that a known Śruti text takes precedence of one unknown. It goes further and lays down that a Smṛiti text, though uncontradicted by Śruti, is liable to be rejected if it can be traced to an unworthy motive.² On the other hand, in his Mimâṃsâ Sâtras, Jaimini denies to local usage any authority as a source of law independently of Śruti and Smṛiti. A similar opinion is expressed by Mâdhavâcârya in his Jaiminiya Nyâyamâlâvistara, though in his Vyavahâra Khaṇḍa he comes round to the different view of Nârada, Kâtyâyana and others. The Skanda Purâṇa expressly admits that where the Vedas and Smṛitis are silent, the Dharmas should be ascertained by observation of the customs of families and countries. Commenting on Manu, Medhâtithi remarks that Âcâra, as understood in Smṛitis, referred to Śiṣṭa practices uncontradicted by Śruti or Smṛiti. Vijnâneśvara, commenting on Yâjñavalkya, goes further and interdicts action, which, though supported by Smṛitis, is disapproved by usage. Yâjñavalkya himself said that in a conflict between two Smṛiti texts, reason prevailed according to usage. Nârada expresses himself in a

¹ Padma Purâṇa, Uttarakhaṇḍa, Ch. XLIII.

² Pârva Mimâṃsâ, I, Part III, 3-4.

similar strain. But later writers insist that the function of reason is limited to the reconciliation of conflicting texts.¹ From this whole scholastic discussion it follows that the provisions of Smṛitis take account both of recognised ideals and current usage, that custom, social or political, was often recognised as authoritative in ancient India and that the state, in spite of its absorbing activity, had to leave a good deal to groups and associations, and to the operation of general conditions.

Of all the Smṛitis that of Manu is admittedly the most important and authoritative. Bṛihaspati remarks that the

Manu. first rank belongs to Manu, because he has embodied the essence of the Veda in

his work, and that the Smṛiti text which is opposed to Manu is not approved. The Dharma Śāstra of Manu is perhaps based on the Mānava Dharma Sūtra which has disappeared. The Mānavas represent one of the six subdivisions of the Maitrāyaṇi School of the Kṛiṣṇa Yajurveda. According to a tradition, *Manusmṛiti* is addressed to Rājās and other such personages and not to scholars. There are many verses common to the Smṛiti and the Mahābhārata. Manu treats of the whole of life, and, differing from others, declares that the chief good consists in the combination of Artha, Dharma and Kāma. Needless to say, he is wedded to the recognised Dharma of castes and stages and declares, in a most pronounced and dogmatic fashion, for the supremacy of Brāhmanas. Whether ignorant or learned, whether following mean or noble occupations, a Brāhmana is a great divinity. Kṣatriyas derive their origin from Brāhmanas and are to be restrained if they become overbearing towards the latter. Learning is the predominant occupation of a Brāhmana, but Manu, obviously compromising with facts, allows him, in 'distress,' that is, in emergencies, to follow

¹ Nārada, I, 40; Yājñavalkya, XXI; Viṣṇuśekhara on Yājñavalkya, I, V, 136.

agriculture, gleanings of corn, etc.¹ From Manu's list of Brâhmanas who may not be invited to Śrâddha, it appears that some members of the highest caste worked as players, usurers, actors, singers, makers of bows and arrows, keepers of elephants, camels, horses, cattle, tamers of birds, architects, tradesmen, agriculturists, carriers of corpses, butchers, etc., etc.² The Śûdras are barred from all sacred learning. By themselves Śûdras can never form a stable society. A kingdom which is destitute of twice-born people, which contains very many Śûdras and atheists, is soon afflicted with disease and famine and utterly perishes. Brâhmanas should not reside in such a state. Manu makes no secret of his contempt for manual labour.³ He wants the king, that is, the state, to enforce his scheme of caste-superiority and social duties. In particular, Vaiśyas and Śûdras should be compelled to perform their prescribed jobs, for if they swerved from their duties, the whole world would be thrown into confusion.⁴ It is not impossible that Manu's advice was partially followed in practice. It was about this period that Gautamîputra Śâtakarṇi prided himself on his restoration of caste rules.

Besides Śruti and Smṛiti, Manu admits the customs of virtuous men and âtmatuṣṭi or one's own conscience as sources of law. Here is a round-about admission of custom and state-decrees as binding on the people. When he accords equal authority to two conflicting sacred texts, he can only be held to imply that reason or usage was to be the deciding factor. In his chapter on Civil and Criminal Law he is more explicit:

Law.

¹ On the whole subject, Manu, I, 21, 89, 91, 96, 98, 100-101; II, 224; IV, 4; VI, 34-37; IX, 313-323; XII, 88-90.

² Ibid., III, 151 et seq.

³ Ibid., IV, 81, 61; VIII, 22; also, III, 154-167; II, 155, 168; IV, 4-6; V, 83-84; VIII, 413-414. But also II, 238, in a slightly different strain.

⁴ Ibid., III, 13; VIII, 418. For the ban on Śûdras against propounding the law, VIII, 20.

"What may have been practised by the virtuous, by such twice-born men as are devoted to the law, that he (the king) shall establish as law, if it be not opposed to the (customs of) countries, families and castes." Clearly, local and communal custom must always be respected and for the rest, sound tradition should have its way. Elsewhere, too, Manu lays down that legal disputes of all sorts should be decided "according to principles drawn from local usages and from the institutes of the sacred law." Almost in the same breath he advises the judges to depend on "the eternal law" but, in his view, this involves no inconsistency with the observance of local usage.¹ It seems that even when political autonomy was disturbed by imperialistic ambitions, legal autonomy continued in every region. Manu expatiates at length on the ideal,²

the majesty³ of the kingship and the need of a firm policy—*Danḍa* or chastisement, the State.

but he holds that the king should "behave like a father towards all men" and please all. He is probably reflecting actual practice when he wants the king to regulate the economic life of the community. The king should watch and control traders—"open cheats." He must fix the prices of all marketable goods, mark the weights and measures and re-examine them every six months. The followers of various occupations, mechanics, manual workers come in for state supervision. Physicians or veterinary surgeons, who wrong their patients, must be fined.⁴ Manu again seems to steer close to facts when he insists on the appointment of a learned *Brāhmaṇa* as the royal priest and of seven or eight ministers. Every day they should be

¹ *Ibid.*, II, 14; VIII, 3, 8, 46.

² *Ibid.*, VII, 37-53, 145-146, 216-226.

³ *Ibid.*, V; VII, 3-12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 14-21, 22-24, 80, 82-88, 144; III, 134-136, 143; VIII, 309, 336, 401-403; IX, 256-260, 304, 309; XI, 18, 22-23.

consulted on peace, war, finance, endowments and general administration. The king should consult them first individually and then collectively and ultimately decide for himself. Another official of first-rate importance was the Ambassador, a sort of foreign secretary and plenipotentiary, who negotiated alliances and transacted that business by which kings "are disunited or not." Then there are a number of other officials concerned with mines, manufactures, storehouses, revenue, etc.¹

In local government the ultimate unit was the village. Every village must have a headman. The successively

Local Govern- ment.	higher areas of local government were formed by groups of ten, twenty, a hun- dered and a thousand villages. Every
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town must have "a superintendent of all affairs" with an army of spies to assist him in "exploring" the behaviour of the people. Local government, as a whole, should be placed in charge of a minister at the headquarters. A company of soldiers must be stationed "in the midst of two, three, five or hundreds of villages for the protection of the kingdom." Manu seems to prescribe salaries in land or in kind. The village headman is entitled to certain commodities such as food, drink and fuel which the villagers ought to furnish daily to the king. The head of ten villages is entitled to one kula of land, that is, as much as would suffice for the maintenance of one family; the ruler of twenty villages to five kulas; the lord of a hundred villages is to get a village in Jâgir as the medieval Indian rulers would have called it. The ruler of a thousand villages is entitled to the revenues of a town.² All this seems to have a basis in facts. There was no need to idealise here; in fact, the idealistic vein is altogether absent. There is a

¹ Ibid., VII, 54-68, 80-81, 147-51.

² Ibid., VII, 118-122

tough of realism in what Manu says of the need of supervising and controlling royal officials. These, though appointed for the protection of the people, "generally become knaves" and seize the property of others. Evil-minded officials who were guilty of bribery must suffer the confiscation of their whole property and must be banished. Ministers or judges who were at fault in the discharge of their duties should be fined a thousand panas.¹

Manu's maxims on taxation throw some light on contemporary practice. In Manu, as in the Mahābhārata and

Revenue.

elsewhere, the theoretical justification for the large amount and variety of state dues is that they represent the price of the protection which the state extends to all. The land revenue should be one-fourth, one-sixth or one-eighth of the crops, that is, of the gross produce. It is possible that in Manu's age the land-revenue varied from one-fourth to one-eighth in different localities. Besides, a fiftieth of cattle and gold may be taken by the king. He awards the king a sixth part of "trees, meat, honey, clarified butter, perfumes, (medicinal) herbs, substances used for flavouring food, flowers, roots and fruits; of leaves, potherbs, grass, (objects) made of cane, skins; of earthen vessels, all (articles) made of stone." The duties on traders should be fixed on a consideration of the rates of sale and purchase, the means of communication, the charges of securing goods and the necessary expenses of the dealers. Elsewhere Manu gives the state one-twentieth of the value of each saleable commodity as calculated by experts. All who live by traffic should annually pay something, be it a trifle. Any attempt to defraud the customs-house was to be punished with a fine, eight times the amount due. Mechanics, artisans and Śādras who lived by manual labour should contribute to the state a day's labour in the month.

¹ Ibid., 123-44; IX, 234.

Treasure-trove belonged to the king. Of property inadvertently lost and afterwards found, one-sixth, one-tenth, or at least one-twentieth should go to the king. Lost property, unclaimed for three years, should lapse to the king. Of treasure discovered underground, one-half should go to the king and the other half distributed among Brâhmaṇas. Besides all this, numerous petty dues were levied at ferries: "... an (empty) cart shall be made to pay one paṇa, a man's (load) half a paṇa, an unloaded man one-half of a quarter." Carts laden with merchandise should pay according to the value of the goods. In addition to these contributions Manu hints at some state monopolies, as also at some restrictions on exports and perhaps also imports. Those who violated these rules were to suffer the confiscation of their whole property.¹ No theorist could merely invent this extensive list. Whatever the embellishments, Manu is pointing to the extraordinarily large number of sources which the state had begun to tap by the second century A.D. to fill its coffers. He may again be building on facts when he exempts learned Brâhmaṇas, old persons past seventy, the blind, cripples and idiots from taxation.²

Manu's civil and criminal code is primarily idealistic but a few of its provisions might well have corresponded with reality. In the first place, its eighteen categories are interesting: (1) non-payment of debts, (2) deposit and pledge, (3) sale without ownership, (4) concerns among partners, (5) resumption of gifts, (6) non-payment of wages, (7) non-performance of agreements, (8) rescission of sale and purchase, (9) disputes between the owner and his owners, (10) boundaries, (11) assault, (12) defamation, (13) theft, (14) robbery and violence, (15) adultery, (16) duties of man and wife, (17) partition, (18) gambling and betting. Treason

¹ Ibid., VIII, 30-45, 307-8, 398-99; VII, 127-138; IX, 44.

² Ibid., 133-36; VIII, 394.

against the king, murder of Brāhmanas, women and children should be punished capitally. A cut-purse should be punished by two of his fingers being cut off for his first offence. If he repeated the crime, he should lose a hand and a foot, while for the third offence, he should be punished capitally. Robbers who cut the walls and committed thefts should be deprived of their hands and fastened on sharp stakes. Those who sheltered or helped the thieves in any way should be punished as thieves.¹ The destruction of the wall or gate of a town or the filling up of the ditch should be punished with instantaneous banishment. Adultery should, as a general rule, be punished with a terrible physical mutilation and banishment, though its detailed provisions are governed by considerations of caste. Various fines and damages of various amounts are prescribed for destroying a bridge or a flag, a pole or images of a temple or a royal palace, stealing a rope or water-pot from a well, damaging a water-hut, breaking the dam of a tank or defiling the sanitation of the highways.² Defamation is recognised as a crime though, like adultery, it is governed by notions of caste superiority and inferiority. It may be admitted at once that social status had, at least under rulers of Brahmanical persuasion, something to do with the degree of punishment. But it is doubtful if some of the monstrous penalties prescribed by the Dharma Śāstras were ever carried into effect. If a Śādra mentioned the names and castes of the twice-born with contumely, "an iron rail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth." If he insulted a twice-born man with gross invective, his tongue should be cut out, "for he is of low origin." If he was so arrogant as to teach

¹ Ibid., VIII, 4-7.

² Fines fell into three grades—the first or lowest amercement 250 paṇas, middlemost amercement 500 paṇas, the highest amercement 1,000 paṇas (VIII, 138). Paṇa here is the copper paṇa or kārṣāpaṇa, not silver paṇa (VIII, 138).

Brāhmanas their duties, "the king shall cause hot oil to be poured into his mouth and into his ears." Even harsher and sometimes unspeakable are the punishments prescribed by Manu for graver insults which a Śūdra might chance to offer to superior beings. Here the Brāhmanas seem to be painting themselves worse than they really were.¹

Allowing for obvious ultra-Brahmanical leanings, the judicial procedure of Manu appears to be based on practice.

Judicial Pro-
cedure.

A remarkable feature is the introduction of the popular element into one of the most notable classes of disputes. The question of boundaries between fields and villages has always been a plentiful source of litigation. According to Manu if the inspection of various marks such as tanks, wells, cisterns, fountains and temples, failed to furnish decisive evidence, the case should depend on the testimony of witnesses. These must be examined "in the presence of the crowd of the villagers and also of the two litigants. As they, being questioned, unanimously decide, even so he (the king) shall record the boundary." If no witnesses were available, the case might be left to the decision of people from four neighbouring villages. In certain contingencies Manu allows that the law may be taken in one's hand for recovering one's property.²

¹ Ibid., VIII, 15, 319, 267-73, 276-77, 281-84, 352-53, 359, 364-65, 367-68, 374-85; IX, 232, 271, 276-79, 281-83, 285, 289.

² Ibid., VIII, 48-50. Manu lays down that the king or his officers should not instigate suits (VIII, 53). Suits are to be taken up in the order of the castes of the plaintiffs (VIII, 24). On the use of logic and reasoning in judicial proceedings, VIII, 44. On the invalidity of contracts, VIII, 163-68. For provision of something like a Court of Wards, VIII, 27-29. For provision of payment in work in case of inability to pay in money, VIII, 177.

The Court should be presided over by the king who should maintain a dignified demeanour but should refrain from ostentation in his dress or ornaments.

The Court. He must always be assisted by Brāhmanas and learned counsellors. Seated or standing, he should raise his right arm and "examine the business of suitors." In the absence of the king, a learned Brāhmaṇa should preside over the Court and should be assisted by three counsellors. The judge should try to find out the truth by inferences as a hunter traces the lair of a wounded deer by the drops of blood. "When engaged in judicial proceedings, he must pay full attention to the truth, to the object, to himself, next to the witnesses, to the place, to the time and to the aspect." Manu bars from the witness-box interested persons, friends, companions, enemies, those convicted of perjury, notorious bad characters, followers of forbidden occupations, men of low caste, those deficient in organs of sense, lunatics, thieves, wrathful people, those who are extremely grieved, intoxicated, tormented by hunger or thirst or desire, or oppressed by fatigue, etc. In grave cases, however, the moral competence of witnesses should not be examined too closely. In Manu witnesses seem to share a little of the character of assessors. "On a conflict of witnesses," we are told, "the king shall accept the majority; if (the parties are) equal in number, those distinguished by good qualities; on a difference between the distinguished, the best among the twice-born." When the parties were assembled, the judge was to exhort them by heaven and hell, with the utmost solemnity, to speak the truth. Besides the evidence of witnesses, the observation of the voice, colour, motions, aspect, eyes and gestures of the parties should aid the judge in discovering the internal dispositions of men. Manu recognises two ordeals, though he does not dilate on them at length. If one could dive under water or carry fire, one should be adjudged

innocent.¹ Manu recognises four grades of punishment—admonition, reproof, fines and corporal chastisement. From the last he would exempt Brāhmaṇas. Corporal punishment could fall on any part of the body such as the eyes, ears, the tongue, hands and feet. Imprisonment seems to have been regarded as a variety of corporal punishment.²

Over all officials, judicial or executive or fiscal, as over the people at large, the king should keep a watch through spies. They are the eyes of the king. They are to 'explore' the behaviour of all.³

The ideas of Manu are, for the most part, echoed by Viṣṇu, who, though technically a Sātrakāra, really represents the Dharmaśāstra line and belongs to about the third century A.D. He stresses caste and wants the traditional social order to be enforced by the state. If the king could not recover stolen property, he must recompense its owners from his own treasury. For administrative purposes Viṣṇu prescribes the same scheme of local government as Manu, except that he omits the subdivision of twenty villages.⁴ Viṣṇu's fiscal system is practically the same as that of Manu, though it is far from being definite. The state is entitled to one-sixth of the gross produce of the land, one-tenth of the price of the articles sold within its frontiers and to one-twentieth of those sold outside. The latter is tantamount to an export-duty which might have obtained

¹ Ibid., VIII, 1-2, 9-11, 20-21, 25-26, 71-123, 115-117.

² Ibid., VIII, 127-130, 43.

If the king fails to recover stolen property, he must make it good out of his own treasury (VIII, 40). The king should inflict a fine of 100 paṇas on ministers or judges who might be guilty of illegalities in the work of adjudication (VIII, 234).

³ Ibid., VII, 122, 154; IX, 256, 298.

⁴ Viṣṇu, II, 2-8, 7-16, 65-67, 98; XXIV, 1-8; XXVI, 4-7. See also I, 47; II, 17-21.

in practice. The king could charge a sixth on meat, honey, clarified butter, herbs, perfumes, flowers, roots, fruits, liquids and condiments, wood, leaves, skins, earthen pots, stone vessels and anything made of split bamboo. He could take a fiftieth of cattle, gold and clothes. The government is entitled to the whole produce of the mines and to one-half of treasure-trove, the other half going to Brâhmanas. As in Manu, labourers are to contribute a day's labour in the month. Attempts at evading the customs mean forfeiture of all the goods. A novel provision is that one-tenth of a debt which might be the subject of a law-suit should go to the king.¹ In Viṣṇu, as in Manu, espionage is an integral part of the machinery of government.

Later than Viṣṇu but more systematic, comprehensive and, therefore, more influential is Yājñavalkya. A compilation rather than an original production, his Smṛiti borrows freely from Dharma Sûtras, Manu, Viṣṇu and the Purâṇas among others. According to him there are fourteen seats or sources of the sciences and Dharma—the Purâṇas, Nyâya, Mimâṃsâ, the Dharma Śâstras, the six Aṅgas and the four Vedas. But he seems to have perceived that these authorities did not always agree among themselves. For the correct interpretation and thorough elucidation of law, Yājñavalkya would constitute a Pariṣad or legal assembly of members versed in the Vedas, Dharmas and the three sciences. Its decrees should be considered law. Failing such an assembly, the verdict of the foremost of theologians should be law. Like Manu, he recognises âtmatuṣṭi or one's conscience as one of the sources of law. It will appear that the

¹ Ibid., III, 23—32, 55—64; VI, 20. According to Parâśaramâdhava, 152, Viṣṇu permits the king to receive a tenth of the claim from the debtor as fine and a twentieth from the creditor as part of the expenses of the court.

king did sometimes constitute *Parīṣads* for the solution of legal doubts and that his own conscience, expressed through decrees, was a source of law.¹ In Yājñavalkya the sphere of government coincides with the whole field of human life.² On principles of justice he does not say much that is new. He grants that the customs of families, castes and corporations should be respected but he would allow appeals from their decisions to royal judges. All cases which might have been wrongly decided should be re-tried. His scale of the three *ameracements* differs from that of Manu, being twenty, forty and eighty *paṇas* respectively.³ For the safety of the king, the treasury and the people, numerous fortresses should be erected and placed in charge of experts.⁴

Contemporaneously with the earliest *Smṛitis* arose another class of writings, called *Arthasāstras*, treatises on welfare or profit, which treat of politics and economics more or less independently of religion. The *Arthasāstra*, in fact, is something like the secular counterpart of the *Dharmaśāstra*, just as the *Kāmasāstra* is the erotic counterpart of it. All the three seem to have arisen at pretty much the same epoch and might have been the result of the same intellectual movement of specialisation. The *Mahābhārata* professes to quote from several teachers who are mentioned in *Kauṭilya* and may be supposed to be his forerunners. But the oldest extant work of its kind is the *Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra*, discovered in Southern India less than a generation ago. Its discoverer and first editor, Mr. Shamasastri, accepted and argued for the age-long tradition of its authorship by Cāṇakya, or

¹ Yājñavalkya, I, 3—5, 7, 11.

² For the attitude and functions of the king, *Ibid.*, XIII, 309—13, 344, 354—61, 364 et seq., 327—41; XVI, 20; XVIII, 4-5, 12.

³ *Ibid.*, II, 30, 305; XIII, 366—68.

⁴ *Ibid.*, XIII, 353.

Kauṭalya, supposed to be the mighty Chancellor of the first Mauryan emperor in the 4th century B.C. In his Introductory Note Fleet countenanced the conclusion which still finds support with some scholars. But in a few years the conclusions of Mr. Shamasastri were called in question and a battle of articles has ever since raged over the problem. Rāmakriṣṇa Gopāla Bhāṇḍārkar came to the conclusion that the first or second century A.D. was the earliest date which could be assigned to Kauṭalya. Jolly, a later editor of the work, argues like Winternitz, that the real author was "a theoretician, no statesman but perhaps an official in a state of medium size." The ascription of the work to Kauṭalya or Cāṇakya was "entirely due to the myths current regarding the fabulous minister who was looked upon as the master and creator of the art of polity and as the author of all the floating wisdom on the subject of Niti." Both the scholars think that "we might abide by the third century A.D. as the probable date of the work." Berriedale Keith strongly argues for the same view ¹

¹ In support of the fourth century B.C. as the date of the Arthaśāstra, see Shamasastri's Preface to his edition of the Arthaśāstra; Fleet's Introductory Note; T. Ganapati Śāstri's Introduction to his edition of the Arthaśāstra; Jacobi, *Ind. Ant.*, June-July, 1918; K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity I*, Appendix C, pp. 203-215; N. N. Law, *Calcutta Review*, September-December, 1924; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, VII, 1925-26, pp. 65 et seq.; Radha Kumud Mookerji's Introductory Essay on the Age and Authenticity of the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭalya in N. N. Law's *Studies in Ancient Hindu Polity*. See also H. C. Ray, *Ind. Ant.*, 1925, pp. 170, 201. L. D. Barnett in his "Indian Antiquities" does not commit himself but works on the basis of the same hypothesis. V. A. Smith (*Early History of India*, 3rd and 4th editions) and F. W. Thomas (*Cambridge History of India*, I) use the Arthaśāstra in connection with the Mauryas.

For R. G. Bhāṇḍārkar's views, *Proceedings of the First Oriental Conference*, Poona, 1920.

For the third century A.D. as the most probable date of the Arthaśāstra see Introduction to Jolly and Schmidt's edition of the Arthaśāstra, pp. 1-47; Jolly's paper "Kauṭalya and Cāṇakya" submitted to the Fourth Oriental Conference, Allāhabād, 1926; Winternitz, *Calcutta Review*, April, 1924; A. B. Keith, *J.R.A.S.*, 1916, pp. 180-88.

To a student of institutions it is apparent in almost every chapter of the *Arthaśāstra* and particularly in the later ones that the author is writing of very small states. The idea of a big state never enters his horizon. It seems improbable that he flourished during the days of the Maurya, Kalinga, or Āndhra empire. For the same reason he cannot be placed during the Gupta period. A lower date being barred by literary evidence, he seems to belong rather to the 3rd century A.D. than to any other epoch. It is impossible to dogmatise on the subject but the 3rd century A.D. is the best working hypothesis.

Hillebrandt ascribes the composition of the *Arthaśāstra* to a school of Kauṭalya's disciples. Keith ascribes it to some follower of Kauṭalya. But Kauṭalya is really in line with Hindu tradition in introducing his name in his own work. It may be stated, in reply to Keith, that Ācāryāḥ is only the customary honorific plural; that on p. 261 (Shamasastri's edition) Kauṭalya distinguishes the views of Ācāryāḥ from those of Kauṭalya and Vāṭavyādhi; that on p. 320 the views of Ācāryāḥ are distinguished from those of Bhāradvāja. On p. 253, the criticism of Kauṭalya by Bhāradvāja and that of the latter again by Kauṭalya only brings together the opinion of two schools of thought. The fact seems to be that the *Arthaśāstra*, like the *Dharmaśāstra*, had several traditions and that Kauṭalya represented one, perhaps the most powerful, of them. In his text Kauṭalya quotes, it seems, from four schools and thirteen individual teachers (D. R. Bhandarkar, Carmichael Lectures, 1918, pp. 91-99). Of these Manu, Indra or Bāhudantīputra, Brihaspati, Śukra, Viśālākṣa, and Bhāradvāja are also mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. Vāṭavyādhi is one of the names of Uddhava, the friend of Kṛiṣṇa in the *Purāṇas*, specially in the *Srīmad Bhāgavata*.

For references to Kauṭalya in Hindu Literature, Kāmandaka, I, 4-7, Daṇḍin, *Daśakumāracarita*, II, 8 and other works cited by Shamasastri, Gaṇapati Bāstri and Jolly in their introductions to the editions of the *Arthaśāstra* the Jaina Nandisūtra placed the Kauṭilya among the false sciences though about the 10th century A.D. the Jaina author Samadeva Sūri borrowed the material of his *Nītivākya-mṛita* from Kauṭalya.

The author of the *Arthaśāstra* is also called Cāṇakya or Viṣṇugupta. Hemacandra in his *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* (Bombay Edition, p. 34) and Yādavaprakāśa (Vaijayantī, ed. Oppert p. 96) also call him Drāmila. Hemacandra identifies him with Vātsyāyana, the author of the *Kāmasūtra* (Shamasastri, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. IV, pp. 210-16). The identification is not corroborated in the rest of Sanskrit literature but the resemblance in the style of the two works is striking.

In Mss. of the *Arthaśāstra*, both Kauṭalya and Kauṭilya occur as spellings of the author's name. Both may, therefore, be held to

As a scheme of administrative organisation, the Arthasāstra is unsurpassed in Hindu literature. It is complete in its perspective, detailed in its regulations,

The value of the Arthasāstra. thorough in its treatment. It makes provision for all contingencies, for all im-

aginable possibilities. As a statement of Hindu administrative theory, it leaves hardly anything to be desired. But its supreme merit is its gravest defect as a source of information on administrative practice. Here are no incidental references as in the Brāhmaṇas, Epics and Jātakas, which, merely on account of their inadvertence, may be held to be true to facts. Nor is politics here subsidiary and, therefore, roughly reflecting current practice as in the Dharma Sūtras and Dharma Śāstras. In the Arthasāstra everything is elaborately planned, carefully thought out. In its own sphere it is an ideal, an utopia. Kauṭalya's dialectical method points in the same direction. He is fond of inventing problems and riddles. Where possible, he states, discusses and corrects the views of others—and aims at the perfect conclusion. It is thus only in fundamentals and in broad outline of administrative structure which no theoretician could have produced out of his own fancy, that Kauṭalya can be relied on for the practical working of institutions. On the other hand, Kauṭalya's secular tone and freedom from any religious bias tend to show that priestly influence was not always so powerful as the Dharma Śāstras might lead us to suppose.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to check Kauṭalya by reference to contemporary facts. The third century A.D.

be correct. But of the two Kauṭalya is preferable. That is the form which occurs in the Alur Inscription of Vikramāditya V of the tenth century A.D. (Ep. Ind., XVI, No. 7), and also in another inscription of the thirteenth century A.D. (Indian Historical Review, 1925, pp. 569, 786). The name is not, as some scholars have supposed, a nickname signifying 'false' or 'fraudulent.' For the matter of that, as has been pointed out, Sunaśepa means 'dog's tale' and Divodāsa, 'time-server.'

which is his most probable epoch, is, as V. A. Smith puts it, "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history, and almost every event of that time is concealed from view by an impenetrable veil of oblivion."¹ It can only be premised that so far as he reflects any actual practice, it is that which prevailed about the 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

The general political conditions in Kauṭalya are the same as in Manu, Viṣṇu and Yājñavalkya and are not out of harmony with what little we know of the country between the fall of the Mauryan empire and the rise of the Gupta Empire.

General political conditions.

Causes of war among the small states into which the country was divided were always present. The clearing of forests on the frontiers of two or more states seem to have led to complications. The schemes of colonisation which might follow were another fruitful source of misunderstandings. Irrigation from the long rivers which ran through more than one state presented its own difficulties. Frontiers themselves were a problem. Then there were all the petty insults, real or imaginary, to the honour and dignity of sovereigns. Mere aggression, the quest for empire, which public opinion, political philosophy and tradition had sanctified, made confusion worse confounded. It was noticed that a given state—call it A—tended to embroil itself with its neighbours, say, the states of the circle X. These, in their turn, would be at daggers drawn with their adjacent neighbours, say of the circle Y. It seems to follow that these last would be allies of the state A. But as some states of the circles X and Y themselves adjoined one another, and were therefore likely foes, the general rule of political alliance and hostility was disturbed. On a balance of considerations it appeared that some would

¹ Early History of India, p. 212, also p. 276.

be foes, some allies, others neutral, and yet others completely indifferent to A. If you imagine a third circle Z, a more delicate balance will have to be struck. On the whole, a single group of alliances and enmities and neutralities would consist of twelve kings which might be classified as follows:—

- I. (1) The Vijigīṣu or would-be-conqueror in the centre.
- II. Five kings in front of the Vijigīṣu, thus :—
 - (2) Ari, the enemy.
 - (3) Mitraprakṛiti, the friend of the Vijigīṣu.
 - (4) Arimitra, friend of the friend of Vijigīṣu.
 - (5) Mitrānitra, friend of the friend of Vijigīṣu.
 - (6) Arimitrānitra—friend of the enemy's friend.
- III. Behind the Vijigīṣu :—
 - (7) Pārṣṇigrāha—a rearward enemy.
 - (8) Ākranda—a rearward friend.
 - (9) Pārṣṇigrāhāsāra—friend of the rearward enemy.
 - (10) Ākrandāsāra—friend of the rearward friend.
- IV. (11) Madhyama—intermediary.
- (12) Udāsina—or neutral.

The idea is further subjected to mechanical and mathematical treatment until it gives rise to jigsaw puzzles which stray from reality as they advance in ingenuity. But from all that one thing emerges very clearly. Every state stood in all sorts of relationships with others ranging from complete indifference to deadly hostility or close alliance. In Kautalya, interstate diplomacy knows no morality. Neither unprovoked aggression, nor the violation of the neutrality of other states seems to cause any surprise. Spies and other secret agents revel in falsehood or immorality and freely resort to treachery, poison and the dagger. A strong power is expressly

enjoined to embark on a career of conquest, subdue state after state and stand forth as the one all-embracing sovereign. Kauṭalya makes one approach to principle in diplomacy. He unfolds the idea of a balance of power. A king might represent to the neighbouring circle of states that a particular sovereign was growing too powerful, that he might destroy them all and that all should, therefore, march against him. Even this idea of balance, however, is only part of the general calculation which dominates the whole theory of interstatal relationships.

On the other hand, Kauṭalya advises the conclusion of treaties and even defensive and offensive alliances in furtherance of common interests, such as the plantation of colonies, the clearing of forests, reclamation of wild tribes, construction of long trade-routes, fortification of strategic centres and the working of mines.

Wars and alliances of a certain character resulted in the establishment of the relation of protector and protecto-

rate. Driven to extremities, a weak state

might purchase peace by sacrifice of its honour, by consenting to furnish hostages, by paying indemnity, or by binding itself to military service. But under favourable circumstances it might violate its agreements. There were ways and ways of commencing a war of liberation. A hostage might be encouraged to escape in any one of innumerable ways. And so forth. The whole subject is treated with an inexhaustible wealth of detail, supposition and ingenuity. On the other hand, the suzerain should do all he can to keep a permanent hold on his fresh acquisitions. Here force would be of little avail. Conciliation was the right policy. The suzerain should not attempt to bring a new acquisition into uniformity with his original territory. To use a modern term, there should be no annexation. The subdued dynasty should be maintained on the throne. Let the suzerain rescue the dependent princes from

misfortunes, redress their grievances, treat them with honour and kindness and even shower on them wealth and dignity. Their family and property rights should be respected. Nor should these principles be departed from on the death of the first vassal. The latter's son should be duly crowned. The people of the feudatory states should be disturbed as little as possible. Manners and customs corresponded to conveniences and should be respected by the suzerain. What was good for one place might not be good for another.

All the same, the strictest watch should be kept on the vassals—the *Sāmantas* as they are called. All their secrets must be ascertained through spies, through prostitutes, through all other conceivable means, fair and foul. The most shameless falsehoods and immoralities might be employed to keep them disunited. Nor should the secret dagger or poison be spared in case of need. On all this Kauṭalya dilates at great length and in a manner which might have shocked Machiavelli himself. He cannot be taken as an exact mirror of existing conditions. Here, as everywhere else, his imagination, his turn for systematisation, his genius for classification are discernible. But he leaves no doubt that the ordinary state in his time comprised many feudatories whose relations with the suzerain were often clouded by suspicion and occasionally characterised by ferocity and treachery on one side or the other.¹

¹ Kauṭalya, *Arthaśāstra* ed. Shamasastri, Book VII, pp. 261—319, 380, 407.

Cf. Kāmandaka (who, according to Winternitz, lived in the 8th century A.D., and according to others in the 6th or 7th century and who based his *Nītisāra* almost entirely on Kauṭalya), VIII, 20, 16-17; IX, 45, 2—21, 75; X, 18—22; XVII, 2-3. Also the *Agni Purāṇa*, Canto CXXL.

Some of the maxims of Kauṭalya are condemned by Bāṇa, in his *Kādambarī*, ed. Peterson, Vol. I, p. 109.

For a comparison, not altogether accurate, of Kauṭalya with Machiavelli, see G. B. Botazzi, *Precursori di Nicolo Machiavelli in Grecia* ad in India, Kauṭalya ad Thucidide, tr. B. K. Sarkar, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1926.

On the whole, Manu stands on a much higher moral pedestal than Kauṭilya. Once he interdicts all treacherous conduct on the part of a king. On the conclusion of a victorious campaign a king should display gentleness and generosity.

Comparison
with Manu.

After ascertaining the desires of the vanquished, he should instal a scion of the fallen dynasty on the throne, if need be, on his own terms. He should honour his new protégé and the latter's principal officials with precious gifts. Promises of safety should be proclaimed and the customs of the people declared authoritative. Even Manu, however, permits the devastation of hostile territory in times of war. When a king has shut up his foe in a town, "let him sit encamped, harass his kingdom, and continually spoil his grass, food, fuel and water. Likewise let him destroy the tanks, ramparts and ditches." Even in Manu, it is almost the duty of a king to sow dissensions in the ranks of his enemies.¹

On these matters as on so many others Viṣṇu reads like an echo of Manu. The old dynasty of a conquered country should be maintained, unless it is of ignoble descent. So far as possible, a conqueror should invest a prince of the same line with the 'royal' dignity.² In his scheme of foreign policy as in domestic administration spies play an important part.³

Viṣṇu.

Yājñavalkya, too, expounds the usual policies of conciliation, diplomacy, fraud and force. When a country has been conquered, its customs, laws, and family usages must be maintained. On the other hand, a king should attack the enemy when the latter is weak and his realm is filled with corn and provisions. Nothing can be more meritorious than to acquire wealth by war and bestow it on Brāhmaṇas.⁴

Yājñavalkya.

¹ Manu, VII, 104, 122, 154, 158-207; IX, 256, 298.

² Viṣṇu, III, 47-9.

³ Ibid., III, 35.

⁴ Yājñavalkya, XIII, 321, 353.

The cumulative evidence of Manu, Kauṭalya, Viṣṇu and Yājñavalkya, all of whom belong to the great interregnum between the Mauryas and the Guptas tends to show that the country was divided into a large number of states, that they were constantly vacillating between the status of suzerain and that of vassal, that many a state had a number of dependencies and that the internal autonomy of a dependency was generally, though not uniformly, respected, that the status of a protectorate was most difficult to define ranging as it did from almost complete independence to practical annexation, that the acknowledgment of suzerainty might have been merely nominal in some cases, while other states might have been reduced to mere estates. Kauṭalya's reference to some people as Śāstropa-jivinaḥ is obscure but it probably means those who lived by their arms and refers to some warlike clans.¹ His characterisation of Dvairājya as productive of rivalry and mutual conflict leading to destruction indicates some peoples who had not evolved a regular form of monarchical government.² In the vocabulary of politics, feudalism is the only word that describes this state of things. The difference between the conditions of medieval Europe and the India of the early Christian era is apparent but the actual position of the state and its head show points of resemblance in either country. It is the institutions of such a small state, ridden by feudalism, that Kauṭalya seeks to portray in what appeared to him an ideal form.

The scope of the activity of the state in Kauṭalya includes practically everything. It should promote true religion but Kauṭalya wants it to regulate the age and conditions under which one might renounce the world.

The scope of
state-activity.

¹ Arthaśāstra (ed. Shamasastri), p. 376.

² Ibid., p. 323.

The state should see that husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, uncle and nephew, teacher and pupil are faithful to one another and do not play each other false. The state itself should provide support to poor, pregnant women, to their new-born offspring, to orphans, to the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and the helpless.¹ He lays down when men may use witchcraft to gain the affections of their wives or sweethearts and when, for instance, in cases of perversion for incestuous purposes, it was to be punished with mutilation or death.² He prescribes the conditions of divorce, separation, second or subsequent marriages, ways of teaching manners to refractory women.³ Detailed and minute are his provisions for safeguarding the honour of women, the safety of immature girls, relations of lovers, etc.⁴ His law of adultery, proceeds on lines of caste.⁵ Coming to elopement, he would legislate on every step, on every possibility, in that complicated affair.⁶ He classifies prostitutes, places them under a state superintendent, prescribes their fees, checks their tendency to extravagance, limits their expenditure, lays down their conduct in detail towards their paramours, provides for their safety and does not fail to decree that one-fifteenth of their income should go to the state.⁷

¹ Ibid., pp. 47-48; 199. Differing from Manu (VIII, 138) and others, Kautilya gives the following scale of fines: the first amercement ranging from 48 to 98 *panas*, the middlemost amercement ranging from 200 to 500 *panas*, and the highest ranging from 500 to 1,000 *panas*.

² Ibid., 232-35.

³ Ibid., 153-59.

⁴ Ibid., 124, 183, 228-29.

⁵ Ibid., 190, 232-35.

⁶ Ibid., 232-35.

⁷ Ibid., 124-25, 184.

The state should facilitate, regulate and control public amusements and entertainments. It was to assist the foundation of academies where actors and actresses might learn reading and writing, music and song, dancing and painting and where they might master a complete code of deportment and blandishment. The movements of dancers, rope-dancers, buffoons, jugglers, mimic players and *troubadours* were to be regulated and a fifteenth of their incomes taken as the dues of the state.¹

Gambling was to be controlled by a Superintendent who should appoint definite places, supply water and other conveniences, of course, for a consideration, and hire out dice at the rate of a Kâkpi per pair. He was to appropriate five per cent. of all winnings for the state. To play anywhere else should mean a fine of twelve paṇas. The same rules apply to all betting and challenging, except in learning and art. While the play was in progress, the superintendent should exert all his psychological skill in detecting thieves and spies.²

The same three fold motive of regulating life, detecting thieves and spies, and securing some revenue for the state underlies Kauṭalya's excise policy. In town and country, camp and forts, the state should itself establish liquor shops at suitable distances from one another or license private individuals to do so according to the laws of supply and demand. Kauṭalya would furnish public houses with beds and seats and enhance their attractions with scents, garlands of flowers, water and other comforts. Stringent regulations on the sale and use of liquor and other fermentations are given

¹ Ibid., 48-49, 125, 202.

² Ibid., 197-98.

but the code of temperance was to be relaxed for four days on occasions of festivity, fairs and pilgrimages.¹ On the slaughter of animals and the sale of meat, Kauṭalya is equally minute.² According to the Arthaśāstra, all professions and occupations are to be controlled by the state. For instance, physicians should report all cases of grave illness to the government. If death occurred in an

unreported case, the physician should be punished with the first amercement. If in any case death was due to his care-

lessness, he should receive the middlemost amercement, while positive neglect or indifference was to be treated as assault or violence.³ Similarly, rules with an amazing fulness of detail are given for the conduct of goldsmiths, weavers of various descriptions, washermen, and others,⁴ while a series of veritable draft statutes of labourers prescribes, *inter alia*, that artisans must fulfil their engagements as to time, place and form of work and obey the instructions duly given, on pain of forfeiting their ways or paying damages or both.⁵

In Kauṭalya the state itself appears as the biggest of all business concerns. Details apart, the theory probably reflects a fact. There are some small states even to-day, for instance, in Central India, which stand forth as business corporations to supplement their regular revenue. The proceeds from the crown lands and such of the revenue as was paid in kind are likely to have formed a vast store. The land or 'ocean' mines would yield large quantities of salt, pearls, precious stones and metals. The forests

The state as a business concern.

¹ Ibid., 119-21.

² Ibid., 122-23.

³ Ibid., 202.

⁴ Ibid., 201.

⁵ Ibid., 201, 204.

would yield valuable timbers, fire-wood, fodder, and various animal products—teeth and tusks, bones, horns, hides and so forth. There seem to have been some state-monopolies. Besides, there were factories of oils, etc., which employed large numbers of men and women. The stores and factories were under the charge of the Koṣṭhāgāra. The sale of raw produce or manufactured articles belonging to the state was managed by a superintendent who fixed the markets, prices and so on, or by Koṣṭhāgāra who also regulated barter, etc.¹ The state is to own ships and boats and ply them on hire at fixed rates.²

It need hardly be stated that Kauṭalya would regulate the whole economic life of the community. He would

Economic life. promote the prosperity of the people by all conceivable means. The agricultural population should be more or less evenly distributed.

Agricultural. The state should encourage immigration and emigration to remedy the scarcity of population or relieve congestion, and should found new villages. Land which the state cleared of forests should be given to cultivators for life. Crown-lands might be cultivated partly by slaves, prisoners, and hired labourers who, as well as their overseers, should be paid according to the work done. Those who did not cultivate the land themselves should employ labourers or forfeit the property. If the peasants promptly paid government dues, they should be supplied with grains, cattle or money on favourable terms to relieve their distress. Uncultivated land was to be used for pasture. Groups of ten, two hundred, four hundred and eight hundred villages should be guarded by fortresses of varying strength.³ Kauṭalya wants a meteorological department to study the weather in the interests of agriculture.

¹ Ibid., 98—5, 98—101. For the rules of work, rewards, bonuses, etc., Ibid., 113—15.

² Ibid., 126—28, 140—41.

³ Ibid., 116—18.

He has an elaborate system of irrigation from tanks, wells, rivers and canals. The charges were to be a third, a fourth, or a fifth of the produce of the irrigated soil, according to the source or method of irrigation. Any wanton interference with irrigation facilities was to be severely punished.¹ For relief of famine, the state granaries should open their doors, the rich should be compelled to yield up their hordes of grain, heavy taxes should be levied on wealthy people, hunting and fishing should be resorted to on a grand scale; emigration to the sea-shore, and to the banks of lakes, rivers, etc., should be encouraged; wherever possible, grains, vegetables, roots and fruits should be intensively cultivated. Relief should be sought from friendly states in the neighbourhood; prayers should go forth to the higher powers; the gods Mahâkaccha, and Indra, the gods of the mountains and the holy Ganges should be worshipped.²

Passing from agriculture to commerce, Kauṭilya would license merchants to collect grains and other commodities for wholesale business and would confiscate the goods of unlicensed mercantile houses. On a variety of considerations such as the outlay of capital, the interest thereon, the quantity manufactured, the amount of toll, the expenses of hire, and so forth, the Superintendent of Commerce should strike the balance and fix the prices. In wholesale transactions a five per cent. profit should be allowed on home commodities and ten per cent. on foreign ones. But if the merchants failed to dispose of their stock wholesale, or if obstructions in traffic put them to loss, a higher rate of profit should be allowed.

¹ Ibid., 47, 117, 144, 227. See also p. 228 for protection of harvests. For other agricultural measures and for protection against cattle-disease, Ibid., 48-49, 140-41.

² Ibid., 206-07.

Frauds in this matter should be punished heavily according to the amounts involved. Combinations among capitalists for fraudulent purposes and any other attempts at deception, or adulteration of goods were to be severely dealt with. Rates of interest on loans and mortgages should be fixed at 15 and $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.¹ Kauṭalya would so regulate the customs as to secure the effective control of the market. All sales must be transacted in the market-place. All imports and exports are to be taxed. On flowers, fruits, vegetables, roots, bulbous roots, dried meat and dried fish, $16\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. should be charged; on fibrous garments, cotton cloths, silk, mail armour, red arsenic, vermilion, metals, colouring ingredients, sandals, pungents, ferments, dress and so forth, wine, ivory, skins, raw materials for fibrous or cotton garments, carpets or curtains, products from worms, goats, and sheep—10 or $6\frac{2}{3}$ per cent.; on some cloths, quadrupeds, bipeds, threads, cotton, scents, medicines, wood, bamboo, fibres, skins, clay-pots, grains, oils, sugar, salt, liquor, cooked rice and so forth, 4 or 5 per cent. The tolls on conch-shells, diamonds, precious stones, pearls, corals, and necklaces should be determined by experts according to the time, cost and finish of the articles. It is emphasised that the sales in the market-place should be made by public proclamation. Smuggling, fraudulent combinations, adulterations were to be severely punished. Besides the principal dues, there are some minor tolls, ferry-charges, road-cesses, from which a number of articles are, according to their destination and purpose, exempted.² The state is to provide, manage and regulate the Rāja-mārga or the king's highway, Rāṣṭra-patha or the state road, and paths for animals, paths for asses and camels, cart-tracks, foot-paths, pasture-paths, shop-paths, defile-paths cremation-paths, etc.

¹ Ibid., 137, 174, 203-04.

² Ibid., 113-15.

On the main thoroughfares, pillars at intervals of half a kos, should be set up to serve as sign posts.¹

Kauṭalya is willing to grant privileges and concessions to guilds, and to protect them from outside competition,

but he wants the state to maintain a tight hold on all corporations. The

Guilds. superintendent of accounts should register the professions, customs and professions of various guilds. Three commissioners, enjoying the confidence of the guilds, should be appointed to receive the deposits which should be returned in times of distress. On the other hand, when the state is in need of money, Kauṭalya would permit it to rob guilds by any shameless frauds.²

Besides guiding the day-to-day life of the community, the state should provide for all national calamities. Pestilences are to be fought by organised

Provisions
against calami-
ties, etc.

bands of physicians and by supernatural means; floods by wholesale relief measures and worship of rivers. To guard against fire, villagers should provide themselves with tubs and pots filled with water, ladders, axes, winnowers, hooks and leather bags. Or they must cook their food outside their homes. Many rational and many supernatural expedients are similarly prescribed against rats, snakes, locusts, birds, insects, etc., as also against demons.³ Social helpfulness in ordinary life as well as in emergencies is prescribed to all on risk of severe penalties.⁴ In the course of his treatment of civil law, Kauṭalya regulates inheritance in all its aspects and gives some rather eccentric provisions. He is, however, careful to lay down that unclaimed property except when it happened to belong to

¹ Ibid., 30, 47—49, 54, 298.

² Ibid., 185—87.

³ Ibid., 205—208.

⁴ Ibid., 199, 208.

learned men, escheated to the state.¹ For priests and scholars he would provide freeholds.²

To discharge these all-embracing functions, Kauṭalya prescribes for the state a corresponding administrative organization. For the king, the centre of

The king. the centre, he frames a detailed timetable, which, besides private wants, is to be filled with deliberations on state affairs, administrative plans, review of finance and revenue, inspection of the cavalry, the elephant force, the armoury, etc., supervision of spies, receptions, etc.³ By the way, the king's harem should stand

The harem. on a site as secure as possible, should be protected with a parapet and a moat, should consist of many compartments but should be provided with a single gate. Inside, a few very old men and eunuchs excepted, all the guards, attendants and servants were to be females, a few of them, prostitutes. The strictest watch should be kept over all "coming and going."⁴ Polygamy seems to have produced an atmosphere of suspicion and conspiracy within the palace, which, coupled with treason abroad, led to an extraordinary system of watch and guard. Trusted Amazons should attend the king from room to room. Science should exert its utmost skill and lay down minute rules for the detection of poison, etc.⁵ The same harem influences seem to have complicated the problem of the succession. There was backstair

The Succession. intrigue, conspiracy and treason. Kauṭalya talks of disaffected princes being put under lock and key, of plots hatched to secure their release, of the plans being discovered, of the culprits flying into

¹ Ibid., 160—65.

² Ibid., 116—18.

³ Ibid., 87—89.

⁴ Ibid., 40—44.

⁵ Ibid., 42—45.

exile. If a prince broke into revolt, kingship knew no kinship, says Kauṭalya. He might be slaughtered like the meanest bondman. Schools of real politics discussed with heartless ingenuity when and how far kings and princes could desert, deceive and slaughter one another or how young princes might be lulled into luxury and vice to keep them from treason.¹

The king should, on all affairs of state, constantly consult his advisory council of which the number had been

The Council.

placed by Manu (probably a representative of Arthasāstra school occasionally quoted by Kauṭalya) at 12, by Brihaspati at 16, by Uśanas at 20. Kauṭalya himself only remarks that the council should consist of as many members as the needs of the state rendered desirable. The utmost secrecy should be observed in regard to the proceedings of the council. One by one the members should express their opinion and debate freely. The final decision should rest with the king alone who, however, is expected by Kauṭalya to accept the view of the majority. The king might also consult only three or four ministers or even single individuals.²

In the Arthasāstra, the ministers are drawn from a sort of governing class, something like a nobility of birth,

Ministers.

office and intellect, small in numbers. An excellent intellectual grounding, a blameless private life, a sound judgment, a high sense of duty and

¹ Ibid., 32-37. For the prince's education, comprising theology, philosophy, traditional learning, history, politics, administration, 'science of wealth,' military science dealing with elephant forces, cavalry, chariots, armoury, Ibid., pp. 10-11. Kauṭalya's saying that kingship knew no kinship is identical with the saying of the Mughal Emperor Jahāngir, in the 17th, century A.D. See the *Memoirs of Jahāngir* (Rogers and Beveridge), pp. 52-54, Motamad Khān, *Iqbāl-nāma*, 10-11. David Price's version of the *Jahāngirnāma* (p. 66, *Baṅgābāst* edition, pp. 114-115) has a long discourse on 'kingship knows no kinship' which reminds one of Kauṭalya.

² Ibid., 13-29.

a certain amount of popularity are deemed essential qualifications. A discussion recorded by Kauṭalya, though avowedly theoretical, throws a little light on actual conditions. Bhāradvāja advised the king to select ministers from among his old fellow-students, but Viśālākṣa demurred to it as ultimately destructive of royal prestige. Parāśara emphasised loyalty as the foremost qualification but Piśuna pointed out that capacity, intellectual and administrative, was the essential desideratum. Kauṇapadanta held that high birth implied a grounding in traditional political wisdom, but Vāṭavyādhi explained that new men versed in the science of politics were safer. Bāhudantīputra, however, decried theoretical knowledge and laid emphasis on birth and capacity. Kauṭalya himself recognised the force of all these arguments but himself pronounced all-round capacity to be the highest qualification. He would, however, bar foreigners from chief offices and confine them to natives of the soil.¹

Among the high dignitaries of state, the Purohita occupied an important place. He must be versed not merely

The Purohita. in sacred lore but also in the science of government. He must be skilful in reading portents and must be able to ward off providential or human calamities. He must be obedient but in the same breath the king is required to follow him like a student his teacher, a son his father, and a servant his master.²

Kauṭalya knows of a chief minister, mantrin, the sovereign's representative, the vicerent of the state, who

Chief Minister. recalls the Norman-Angevin Chancellor, the Turkish Grand Vizier and, above all, the Vaki of the Indian Mughals.³ The Senāpati or commander-in-chief who also acted as a sort of secretary for

¹ Ibid., 13-16.

² Ibid., 15.

³ Ibid., 16.

war, was another great officer. A third important minister was the ambassador. Kauṭalya lays down that whosoever has been successful as a counsellor is an envoy. There were to be three grades of envoys.¹ The Samāhartā or collector-general of taxes, the Nidhāyaka or treasurer, Saunidhātā, another treasurer, perhaps of a higher grade, the Vyāvahārika or chief judge, the Karmāntika or superintendent of manufactories, the storekeeper, the Nāyaka or chief constable are among the other chief officers.

Portfolios should be occasionally exchanged. Every minister should have a number of assistants and, it seems,

Departments. should control one or more departments officered by Superintendents. Śāsanas,

or Royal commands and decisions should be drawn up by Lekhakas or Secretaries in prescribed form and jargon and duly transmitted to departments.² The precise grouping of the Departments is not stated by Kauṭalya but his work, as a whole, suffices to give an idea of the working of the Departments of Stores, Forest Produce, Agriculture, Pasture lands, Cows, Slaughter-houses, Weights and Measures, the Goldsmith, Commerce, Tolls, Excise, Passports, Ships, etc. On the military side the chief departments are those of Armoury, Elephants, Horses, Chariots and Infantry.³ Every department is provided with a regular secretariat. Messengers formed almost a department by themselves. The Department of Accounts was a remarkable one. It should be located in a building called the Accountant's office with a door facing the north or the east. Seats should be

Accounts. duly arranged for the clerks, and shelves provided for the multitudes of account-

books. Kauṭalya seems to divide the office into several

¹ Ibid., 80—83.

² Ibid., 141. For the writs, pp. 70—75.

³ Ibid., 89—143.

sections, pertaining to the various Departments. A record should be kept of all financial dealings with friendly or hostile sovereigns, together with the treaties and ultimatums which determined them. Corporations or guilds were to be dealt with by a different section. So, too, provinces, villages and families whose customs, professions and transactions were to be duly noted. Gems, precious stones, and other things should be registered with meticulous care—"the rate of their price, the rate of their barter, the counter-weights used in weighing them, their number, their weight, and their cubical measure." But the most complicated of all branches of accounts seems to have been that relating to government factories. "The description of the work carried on, and of the results realised, in several manufactories; the amount of profit, loss, expenditure, delayed earnings, the amount of Vyâji (premia in kind or cash) realised—the status of government agency employed, the amount of wages paid, the number of free labourers engaged, pertaining to the investment of capital of any work"—all should be accurately given.¹

The local officials mentioned by Kauṭalya are interesting. He divides a kingdom into four provinces, each governed by a Viceroy. Antapâlas seem to be officers in charge of frontiers, wardens of the marches. The Âṭavikas took charge of wild tracts. The Durga-pâlas managed the fortifications. There are the same administrative divisions of eight hundred, four hundred and two hundred villages. The Pradeṣtris were in charge of districts, while at the bottom the Gopa was the village-accountant. Kauṭalya nowhere mentions any self-governing institutions in the village. The Nâgaraka is the superintendent of a city. Mention is made of Daṇḍa-pâlas and Prasâstris, magistrates or judicial officers.²

¹ Ibid., 62.

² Ibid., 50, 69-70, 142, 144.

Besides these regular administrative functionaries there were a number of Court and household officers. The High Priest, the sacrificial priest and the royal teacher seem to have ranked among the highest personages of the realm. The *Dauvârîka* or door-keeper and the *Antarvâsika* or superintendent of the harem come in the second grade. The foreteller, the astrologer, the reader of omens, the reader of *Purâṇas*, the sacrificial priests, the retinue of the priest, the storyteller, and the bard occupied the same position as the Superintendents of Departments. The sorcerer and, most curious of all, the honourable playmate of the king, came a little lower. The bodyguards and attendants stood much lower. Every Hindu Court patronised poets and scholars whose emoluments in *Kauṭalya* range from five hundred to a thousand *paṇas* a year. Many musicians receive two hundred and fifty *paṇas* a year.¹ In *Kauṭalya* the salaries and allowances are tremendous in amount.

The highest, 48,000 a year, is given to the preceptor, the High Priest, the teacher, the Chief Minister, the Commander-in-Chief, as also to the Queen, the Queen-mother, and the heir-apparent who, for the purpose, counted as officers of the first rank. The door-keeper, the Superintendent of the harem, the Commander, the Collector-general, and the Chamberlain, receive 24,000 *paṇas* a year; the prince, his nurse, the Chief Constable, the city officer, the Superintendent of Commerce, the Superintendent of Manufactories, members of the Council, Superintendents of country parts and boundaries, 12,000; chiefs of military corporations, chiefs of elephants, of horses, of chariots, of infantry and commissioners, 8,000; Superintendents of infantry, of cavalry, of chariots, of elephants, guards of timber and elephant forests, 4,000; charioteers, physicians, trainers of horses, chief carpenters,

¹ *Ibid.*, 245-47.

and rearers of animals, 2,000; the foreteller, the reader of omens, the astrologer, the reader of purāṇas, the storyteller, the bard, the retinue of the priest, and all Superintendents of departments, 1,000; musicians, 250; trumpet-blowers, twice as much; artisans and carpenters, 120; servants in charge of quadrupeds and bipeds, workmen doing miscellaneous work, attendants upon the royal person, bodyguards and procurers of free labourers, 60; honourable playmate of the king, the elephant-driver, the sorcerer, miners of mountains, all kinds of attendants, teachers and scholars, 500 to 1,000; a messenger of middle quality, ten paṇas for travelling one yojana, and twice as much for travelling from ten to a hundred yojanas; the king's representative in the Rājastīya and other sacrifices, thrice as much as others; the charioteer of the king, 1,000; principal spies such as those who impersonated the fraudulent, the indifferent, the householder, the merchant, and the ascetic, 100; 'fiery' spies, such as those who served as village servants, poisoners, and those who impersonated mendicant women, 500; servants leading the spies, 250. The remuneration of the subordinate executive and ministerial posts was to be fixed departmentally.¹ So far as possible, all transfers were to be avoided among the guard of royal buildings, forts, and country parts. Besides

Bonuses. the regular salaries, the government servants expected bonuses from the king

when they had to bear the expenses of child-birth, sickness or funerals. The wives and sons of those

Pensions. who died on duty should receive pensions.

So, too, the state should afford relief to the aged or infantine dependents of deceased royal servants.

Promotion. Promotion depended on good record rather than on seniority. When the treasury was

¹ It is possible, but it cannot be proved, that the higher grades of salaries included part of departmental expenses,

short of money, payment should be made partly in cash and partly in kind.¹ Many government officers, physicians, veterinary surgeons, messengers, are to be provided with land which, however, they could not sell or mortgage.²

Kaṭalya's judicial system is most elaborate, but there is nothing to indicate how far it corresponded to facts. The details smack too much of theory and must be left out of account. Of course, the King is the highest court of justice. Kaṭalya wants courts to be established in places which formed the headquarters of the circles of eight hundred, four hundred, and two hundred villages and at the meeting-points of districts, and at the headquarters of village circuits. The Courts were of two descriptions, the Dharmasthiya and Kaṇṭakaśodhana, roughly, civil and criminal, though their spheres overlap and the latter is also invested with some police and executive functions. The judicial bench consists of three judges. The whole administration is presided over by the chief judge.³ Equity prevails over the letter of the law but the Kaṭalyan penal code is a stern one. Ordinary wounding is to be punished with corresponding mutilation of the offender, perjury with mutilation of the extremities. Injury to a sacred tree, evasion of title on goods sold, and intrusion on the royal procession going to the hunt—all alike might be capitally punished. In a passage of general application, however, Kaṭalya counsels moderation in the infliction of punishments.⁴ The procedure prescribed by Kaṭalya with a marvellous fullness of detail, is remarkable for its insistence on recording everything, for its rules on witnesses, their qualifications and disqualifica-

¹ Arthasāstra, 245—47. For the Accounts Department, *Ibid.*, 62.

² *Ibid.*, 116—18.

³ *Ibid.*, 147, 169, 171, 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

tions in particular cases, their travelling and sumptuary allowances, their cross-examination and punishments in case of perjury.¹ Clerks of the court who neglected their duties or sided with either party to litigation, judges who abused or ill-treated litigants, or accepted bribes were likewise to be chastised.² Torture is allowed to elicit confession in certain cases and spies play an ubiquitous role in every stage of judicial proceedings. In Kaṭālya

Spies.

the secret service performs four important duties. Its members noted all happenings, all trends and shades of public feeling and sent regular reports on it to the government—veritable 'newspapers'! They toured in foreign states, tried to fathom the intentions of friends and designs of enemies. As such they closely corresponded to spies in modern Europe. They tried to detect sedition and crime in the land, and thus approximated to the modern Criminal Intelligence Department of India. Lastly, they watched the doings of government servants of all ranks and reported to the highest authorities. Here they bear a partial resemblance to the Wāqiah-navīsas—who, however, were not secret officers—the news-recorders, of the Mughal empire.³ The spies are to be drawn from both sexes and all grades of society. They should settle on farms, engage in trade, get into prisons, or wander in all conceivable disguises from one end of the kingdom to the other and in regions far beyond. Or they could stoop lower, commit thefts, regale themselves with drink, and lure marked men—natives or foreigners—with their lascivious charms. Throughout his work Kaṭālya displays an abnormal anxiety

¹ Ibid., 149, 176.

² Ibid., 222–24.

³ Abul Fazl, *Āin-i-Akbarī*, tr. Blochmann. The Hawkins' Voyages, pp. 400–401. Monserrate (tr. Hoyland and ed. Banerji), p. 212. For scattered notices of Wāqiah-navīsas, Abul Fazl, *Akbar-nāmā*. Extracts from their reports are interspersed throughout *Jahāngir-nāmā*, Motamad Khān's *Iqbāl-nāmā*, *Maāsir-i-Jahāngirī* (Khudā Baghshī Ms.), Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī's *Pādshāhnāmā* and other Persian chronicles.

to enlist religion in the service of espionage. He would organise the department in the most thorough-going fashion and devotes many chapters to it. There were to be *Saṁsthās* or institutes of espionage to which all classes of spies were to submit their reports. In laying down their methods of work, Kauṭalya sounds the lowest depths of ignominy. All sorts of contemptible fraud, treachery, sacrilege, immorality and cruelty might be resorted to as the occasion demanded.¹ The remuneration of spies varies according to their grade and the nature of their task and sometimes ranges between 250 and 1,000 *paṇas*.²

Kauṭalya does not fail to provide a thorough system of military defence. *Sthāniya*, *droṇamukha*, *khāravāṭika* and *saṅgrahaṇa* fortresses should be

Defence.

set up in the centres of eight hundred, four hundred, two hundred and ten villages respectively. The frontiers should be protected by forts manned by boundary guards.³ The army comprises regular nationals, mercenaries, recruits from wild tribes, warriors' corporations, immigrants from friendly tracts or deserters from hostile territory. The chief army corps were to be split into divisions and sub-divisions with different flags, trumpets, drums and conch-shells.⁴ Kauṭalya provides physicians and surgeons for the battlefield.⁵

The splendours of the court, the salaries of the officers, the expenses of state departments, the army, and the multifarious activities of the state necessi-

Revenue.

tated a vast revenue which seems to have been derived from various sources. In the system of Kauṭalya, the state itself is the biggest landowner and

¹ *Arthśāstra*, 18-22, 25-26, 208-12, 235-40, 242-44, 376-79, 382-88, 395-401. Kauṭalya (p. 12) calls spies the eyes of the king.

² *Ibid.*, 246.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

business-concern. It claimed a share in the income of every one else. It exacted a large tribute from the feudatories. It appropriated one-sixth of the land-produce with extra fees for irrigation. A heavy exoise on drink, dice and prostitution brought a good deal. Justice, in which heavy fines figure so frequently, might have brought even more. Nothing was manufactured, nothing was distributed, nothing was sold or consumed but something poured into the coffers of the state. The regulation of coinage was in itself a source of income. In the sale of coins which went on, both parties should pay 5 per cent. on their profits to the state. There was a department of the *Rûpadarsaka* for the purpose.¹

A large tribute flowed from the feudatories. Kauṭalya frankly recognises the sale of honours for financial purposes. For emergencies he coolly prescribes the fraudulent robbing, through spies, of guilds, religious institutions, wealthy families and individuals. He lays down various devices for collecting money by imposing on popular credulity. In addition to it all, voluntary subscriptions might be called from the people.²

In broad outline, such is the administrative system prescribed by Kauṭalya. The details which fill every chapter of his work have to be neglected for our present purpose. But that his general principles are true to facts is borne out by his affinities with Manu, the other Dharma Śāstras and inscriptions. Far in the south, the historical and political data supplied by nearly contemporary Tâmil literature tally with the Arthaśāstra. The pages of V. Kanakasabhai's "Tâmil Eighteen Hundred Years Ago," based on literature, often remind one of

Kauṭalya compared with contemporary southern writers.

¹ The different divisions of the coin standard are the *Kârṣāpaṇa*, *Ardha-Kârṣāpaṇa*, *Pāda-Kârṣāpaṇa*, *Caturmāṣaka*, *Trimāṣaka*, *Dvimaṣaka*, *Ekamaṣaka*, *Ardhamāṣaka*, and *Kākaṇika*.

² *Ibid.*, 240-44.

Kauṭalya. For instance, there are groups of royal attendants—perfumers, garland-makers, betel-bearers, arecanut-servers, armourers, dressing valets, torch or light-bearers and bodyguards.¹ Maids and dwarfs are there as in Kauṭalya.² Yet more significant are the rules on harlots and courtezans,³ which, broadly speaking, follow the lines of Kauṭalya. There are tolls and seals on merchandise⁴ on which Kauṭalya expatiates at such length.

A similar conclusion emerges from the study of Tiruvalluvar who flourished in the second or third century A.D.

His Tâmil ethical classic Muppāl or the Tiruvalluvar. Kural, as it is better known, is one of the most popular works south of the Godâvari and has set the standard of literary excellence throughout Tâmilakam.⁵ He insists on the same qualities in the king as Kauṭalya—fearlessness, liberality, wisdom, energy, vigilance, learning, bravery, virtue in general,⁶ freedom from pride, anger, lust, avarice and from low pleasures,⁷ capacity and readiness to hear unpalatable words.⁸ “The king who is without the guard of men who can rebuke him will perish even though there be no one to destroy him.”⁹ As in the Arthaśâstra, so in the Kural, ministers must be of good family and character, should not be ignorant and should not be strangers.¹⁰ The king must be accessible to the people, must personally conduct the administration, examine cases and

¹ Kanakasabhai, *Tâmil Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, 111.

³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵ There are numerous Tâmil editions of the Kural. There is an English translation by Pope and another by J. Lazarus who also translates an excellent Tâmil Commentary (Madras, 1885). A selection, with an English translation, by A. Madhaviyah deserves notice. For brief reviews, Gover, *Folk-songs of Southern India*, pp. 200—245. See also Kanakasabhai, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁶ Kural, ed. Lazarus, pp. 382—84, 387-88, 390.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 431-32, 436.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 389.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 448.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 502, 507—17.

give decisions.¹ The need for consultation is emphasised and the qualifications and duties of the chief officers of state are dwelt upon after the manner of the Arthaśāstras.² On ambassadors, the Kural reads like an echo of the Arthaśāstra.³ On forts,⁴ and on the army,⁵ the Kural is feeble but in line with the Arthaśāstra. Tiruvalluvar's sayings on espionage might, with slight alterations, pass for those of Kauṭalya. A spy and a book of laws are the eyes of a king.⁶ Through spies the king must ascertain daily and quickly what happens among all men.⁷ A spy is one who watches all men, to wit, those who are in the king's service, his relatives as well as his enemies.⁸ As in Kauṭalya, spies are to assume various disguises, such as those of ascetics.⁹ As in Kauṭalya again, the reports of one spy are to be checked by those of another.¹⁰ Honours are not to be conferred publicly on spies lest secrets be divulged.¹¹ Though avowedly an ethical treatise, the Kural when dealing with diplomatic or foreign affairs, betrays the same temper which made Kauṭalya's name a byword for fraud and treachery. Its opportunism, its Machiavellian precepts are exactly parallel to the maxims of the Arthaśāstra.¹²

Another work which must be compared with the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭalya is the Arthaśāstra of Bṛihaspati in Śātra form discovered a few years ago by Dr. The Bārhas-patyā Arthaśāstra. F. W. Thomas. If its references to Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta sects and to

¹ Ibid., 520, 547-50, 561, 568. See also 551-55, 563-67 on righteous rule.

² Ibid., 631-35, 638-40, 643, 646, 655, 660, 675.

³ Ibid., 681-82, 685-86.

⁴ Ibid., 742-50.

⁵ Ibid., 761-62, 764, 766-80.

⁶ Ibid., 581.

⁷ Ibid., 582-83.

⁸ Ibid., 584.

⁹ Ibid., 585-86.

¹⁰ Ibid., 588-89.

¹¹ Ibid., 590.

¹² Ibid., 471-74, 488-90

the Yādavas of Devagiri are genuine, it must be held to be a very late work, not anterior to the 12th century A.D. But these references may be interpolations, for the language and style of the work point to an earlier age. It breathes the Arthasāstra atmosphere.

The little that this treatise of six short chapters has to say pertains mostly to theory. It is remarkable that it unequivocally declares that the precepts of religion are not to be followed when they are opposed to usage.¹ Right is not to be practised by the king if it is disapproved by the world.² The king should keep his wives, relations, friends, counsellors and dependents well in hand. All sorts of means might be employed for the purpose—conciliation, gifts and diplomacy, that is, a policy of divide and rule.³ An effort should be made to arrive at unanimity in the council-chamber.⁴ Youth is declared a disqualification for the delicate office of counsellor.⁵

After emphasising the need of adequate naval and military defence, general protection of the people and enforcement of the social order, Brihaspati wants that rest-houses should be provided for the convenience of travellers, temples and schools, tanks and fields should be looked after, festivals should be encouraged and public houses and harlots should be controlled.⁶

That the ideas imbedded in the Arthasāstras and above all in Kauṭalya remained partly true to facts even in later times is indicated by their persistence in Kāmandaka. Sanskrit literature. About the 7th or 8th

¹ Bārhaspatya Sūtra (ed. F. W. Thomas, Puṇjāb Sanskrit Series), I, 4, also III, 15. For a rather different view, III, 31–36.

² Ibid., I, 4–5.

³ Ibid., I, 46–48, 52.

⁴ Ibid., II, 54; III, 27; IV, 27, 30, 34, 36–44; VI, 4.

⁵ On the qualifications of ministers. Ibid., I, 58; II, 51–52.

⁶ Ibid., III, 18, 26–27, 38, 49, 52–55, 76–78. For other passages of political significance in Brihaspati, see I, 1, 2, 32–35, 51, 93; II, 50; III, 40–41; VI, 8–15.

century A.D. Kāmandaka versified portions of the Kauṭīliya in his celebrated Nītisāra or Essence of Policy.¹ The Agni and Matsya Purāṇas quote whole sections from Kāmandaka. He is likewise profusely drawn upon by later legal writers and commentators, poets and story-tellers. Śaṅkarārya wrote a commentary on Kāmandaka.² In the tenth century A.D. Somadeva cried 'back to Kauṭalya.'

About the time of Kauṭalya, the Buddhist author Āryadeva incidentally offered some political reflections in his Catuḥśatikā. But the only thing noteworthy there is his repudiation of the

doctrine of reason of state. Morality or righteousness must everywhere be in supreme, in public as in private life.³ It is possible that some rulers tried to observe the precept.

Another Buddhist writer Ārya Śūra composed his Jātakamālā about the 4th century A.D., but he follows the Jātakas so closely that he has hardly anything original.⁴

¹ Rājendra Lāla Mitra, M. N. Dutt and B. K. Sarkar hold that Kāmandaka's Nītisāra was taken to the island of Bāli, in the 4th century A.D., but Jolly (Introduction to the Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra, pp. 6-8) is inclined to place the author in the 8th century A.D. Winternitz arrives at the same conclusion. See also Dr. Frederick's Report on the Sanskrit Literature of Bāli to the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences.

In the Nītisāra, see particularly I, 2-7, 11-14, 21-60; II, 61-71; IV, 83; V, 87; VII, 1-2; XXII, 93; XXXI, 54-68.

² The Cāpakya Sūtras (*vide* Appendix to Shamasastri's edition of the Arthaśāstra, 1919) is, in spite of its title, the work of some one else and is, besides, useless for our purpose.

³ Āryadeva, Catuḥśatikā, pp. 462-464.

⁴ Tārānātha's identification of Ārya Śūra with Aśvaghoṣa is, on internal grounds, untenable.

In the Jātakamālā see Stories II and III for royal virtues and generosity, Stories VIII and IX for righteous rule and punishment, Stories X for famine relief, XIII for royal righteousness, XXXI for the picture of an ideal prince.

CHAPTER XI.

The Gupta Empire and After.

In the fourth century A.D. the centripetal forces re-asserted themselves and an empire of the feudal-federal type embracing the greater part of North India and the Deccan came into existence.

The Gupta Dynasty.

The famous Gupta dynasty was founded, as the Allâhâbâd Inscription of Samudragupta records, by a Râja named Gupta. His son was Ghaṭotkaca,¹ whose son and successor Candragupta I. married the Licchavi princess Kumâradevi about 308 A.D. and probably added her patrimony to his dominions. On the obverse of the coins of Candragupta the figure of the Licchavi queen appears along with that of the king himself, while the reverse bears the legend Licchavyah. Probably the Licchavis were a power in eastern India and might have held Pâṭaliputra. The marriage-alliance between the Guptas and Licchavis seems to have resulted somehow in the union of the two principalities. After some additions by conquest, the dominions of Candragupta I. comprised Avadha (Oudh), Tirhut, south Bihâr and the adjoining districts. He assumed the title of Mahârâjâdhirâja and from his reign dates the Gupta era.² He was succeeded, in 330 or 335 A.D., by his

¹ Bloch (Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1903-4, p. 102) identifies this ruler with the Ghaṭotkacagupta whose name occurs on one of the Basâḍh seals. V. A. Smith (J.R.A.S., 1905, p. 153) supports the view. But see D. R. Bhandarkar, Ind. Ant., 1912, p. 3.

² Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III, Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors, ed. and tr. Fleet, No. 1. V. A. Smith, Early History of India, 4th edition, pp. 295-96, also Revised Chronology of the Early or Imperial Gupta Dynasty, Ind. Ant., 1902, p. 257. Fleet, op. cit., p. 33, note 5, emphasises that the Gupta era, like other eras, simply grew out of the habit of dating in regnal years. On the calculation of the Gupta era, Ibid., Introduction,

son Samudragupta who, in a series of brilliant campaigns, imposed his suzerainty on many northern Râjas, nine of whom are mentioned in the Allâhâbâd Inscription; on the frontier kingdoms, chiefships or oligarchies; on the chiefs of wild tribes, and on eleven rulers towards the south. He extinguished some of the old dynasties but allowed others to exist under his overlordship. Hariṣeṇa, the author of the Prasasti on the Allâhâbâd Pillar, boasts that his master conquered the whole earth. He signalised his achievements by celebrating the Aśvamedha sacrifice which seems to have been in abeyance for ages.¹ The range of his alliances extended from the Oxus to Ceylon. Siri Meghavanna or Meghavarna of Ceylon (c. A.D. 352.-79) whom Sylvain Lévi, on the basis of evidence from Chinese sources, has proved to be a contemporary of Samudragupta, sent to the latter an embassy, laden with gems, with a view to facilitate the foundation of a monastery. The northern emperor was pleased to consider the gifts as tribute.² About 375 A.D. Samudragupta was succeeded by his son Candragupta II, surnamed Vikramâditya, who added Mâlwa, Gujrât and Kâthiâwâd to the empire. The Mathurâ Stone Inscription records his boast that he exterminated all kings. He ruled probably until 413 A.D.³ and was succeeded by Kumâragupta I. who, in spite of a temporary set-back, once again performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice and ruled until 455 A.D.⁴ Troubles thickened with the next king

¹ Fleet, Nos. 1, 2. V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, 297-306. The Aśvamedha was marked by a special issue of gold coins which bear on the reverse the legend Aśvamedha Parâkrama, 'the paramount prince of the horse-sacrifice' and the figure of the queen Dattâdevî, while the obverse has an altar and the figure of the sacrificial horse. See Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasties*, etc. See also Rapson, *J.R.A.S.*, 1901, p. 102, for a seal bearing the figure of a horse and the legend Parâkrama.

² Sylvain Lévi, *Ind. Ant.*, 1902, p. 192. Fleet, *op. cit.*, No. 1.

³ Fleet Nos. 3, 4. For an account of the reign of Candragupta II, V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-16.

⁴ V. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-17.

Skandagupta (c. A.D. 455—c. 467), who had to cope with a good deal of internal revolt and with swarms of Huns. The empire fell asunder but the dynasty or its branches continued far into the sixth century A.D.¹

The administration of the Guptas is to be studied primarily from the inscriptions, supplemented by the coins, of the various kings of the dynasty. A few impressions and opinions are presented by the Chinese pilgrim, Fā-hien, who travelled in India from 405 to 411 A.D., and who, though engrossed with Buddhist literature and tradition, has incidentally recorded some facts of secular interest. The great poet and dramatist, Kālidāsa, who belongs most probably to this period, can be noticed in the same connection. So, too, a few other plays like the *Mṛicchakaṭikā* and the *Mudrārākṣasa*. But since an element of doubt attaches almost invariably to the dates of Hindu writers, this class of evidence is best set forth separately at the end.

Fā-hien's observations are of an entirely general nature and may be noticed first of all. The country was well governed; order was maintained; life and property were secure; the roads were safe for travellers. The government did not interfere much in the life of the people; there were no pass-port regulations, and no registration of households. He remarks that slaughter of animals

¹ Ibid., pp. 326—32. A passage in the Jaina *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* (Canto LX, 83—88) has the prophecy that Gupta rule will commence 720 years after the *Nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra, that is, about 193-94 A.D., and that it will endure for 231 years. (K. B. Pathak, *Ind. Ant.*, XV, 1886, p. 141.) On the *Vākāṭakas* in Gupta history, see Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XV, No. 2, pp. 153 et seq.; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, Vol. V, Part I, pp. 31 et seq., Y. R. Gupte, *Journal of Indian History*, December, 1926, pp. 399 et seq.

or drinking was unknown in the country, but he does not mention that either was interdicted by the government. The Guptas were Brahmanists but they observed the rule of toleration and generosity towards all sects. Fā-hien notes that many Buddhist monasteries enjoyed royal grants of land. The criminal law was mild. Fines were the usual form of punishment. Rebellion or brigandage was punished by amputation of the hand. It may, however, be doubted if Fā-hien is correct in the statement that capital punishment was altogether unknown. The revenue was derived chiefly from the crown-lands. Fā-hien mentions free hospitals but only says that they had been founded by benevolent citizens. Those at Pāṭaliputra sheltered the destitute, cripple and diseased from any region. Medicine, food, drink, and all comforts were provided free. There is an interesting notice that the kings of Gandhāra were Brāhmaṇas.¹

The most striking fact which emerges from the study of the Gupta inscriptions is that the empire was dominated by feudalism and that the very idea of a kingdom had become that of a feudal-federal organisation. Rāja or even Mahārāja now means only a feudatory. Sāmanta or Mahāsāmanta has the same significance. The higher feudatories have sub-feudatories under them. The idea of a king, as distinct from a feudatory, is conveyed

Fundamental
Political condi-
tions.

¹ Travels of Fā-hien, tr. Giles, Chs. XXVII, XXXVI, XXXVII. The pilgrim's observations on royal generosity and tolerance are borne out by indigenous evidence. Candragupta I. listened to the Buddhist sage Vasubandhu, to whom the prince Samudragupta was made over for education. Naragupta Bālāditya endowed the Buddhist monastic university of Nālanda with handsome buildings. The inscriptions which have survived testify abundantly to the generosity of courts. So frequent were the grants that a regular code of agrahāras had grown up. (For instance, see Ep. Ind., XI, Nos. 2, 21.)

only by the grand title of Mahārājādhirāja. The suzerain generally assumes two other titles—Paramēśvara and Paramabhāṭṭāraka. These are the titles applied to all independent kings in the Gupta as well as later inscriptions. It is significant that the first two rulers of the dynasty—Gupta and Ghaṭotkaca—are not given these high-sounding designations by their descendants and successors. They are only called Mahārājas.¹ Probably they were only feudatories of more powerful magnates. In Gupta and later inscriptions, feudatories, even when they do not expressly mention their suzerains, are content to call themselves Mahārājas or adopt a similar title. As soon as the Gupta line started on an independent career of its own and, as was almost inevitable in the political circumstances of the times, stood forth as itself the suzerain of some feudatories, it bedecked itself with titles denoting independence and empire. The inscriptions of the Vardhana dynasty which came into prominence in the first half of the seventh century A.D. tell an identical tale.² In this fashion every real kingdom is an empire. An empire or a kingdom is largely a feudal organism. As the internal autonomy of the various regions of an empire is respected, it partakes of the nature of a confederation. The working of this type of polity is well illustrated by the Gupta inscriptions.

The Allāhābād Inscription states that Samudragupta captured and liberated many kings, while violently uprooting some others of the north. In the latter case is implied annexation, in the former mere imposition of suzerainty. In the same strain the inscription goes on to mention that many royal families which had fallen and had lost their sovereignty were re-established. Autonomy

The composition of the Gupta Empire.

¹ Fleet, Nos. 1, 4.

² For another similar instance, Fleet, No. 47.

carried with it the right to retain or develop different systems of organisation. Thus, the Mālavas, Ārjunāyanas, Yaudheyas,¹ Mādrakas, Ābhīras, Prārjunas, Sanakānikas, Kākas, Kharaparikas and others mentioned in the inscription are clearly tribal oligarchies. The Prahalādpur Stone Pillar Inscription² shows the suzerain appointing a chief as the leader of a tribe. The appointment may be only the recognition of a *de facto* ruler. In any case, the tribal oligarchies retain their individuality and internal self-government. Like other states, they issue coins. Indeed, the large number of punch-marked coins issued from various mints testifies to the large number of autonomous or semi-autonomous regions and groups.³ There is a notable passage in the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghōṣa, who flourished about this time, to the effect that a money-changer could recognise from which village, town or capital and from what mint a particular coin was issued. Coinage was thus feudal and local and varied from place to place. So great was this variety that a regular science of coinage grew up as Buddhaghōṣa testifies.⁴ There are numerous coins issued by Nigamas or cities and Janapadas or districts, which testify to the existence of very small, partially autonomous areas. The coins, again, prove that some foreign dynasties were allowed to linger. These, however, were being rapidly assimilated to the Hindu tradition. Thus, the coins of the Sytho-Sassanian Varahan V

¹ On the basis of coin-finds, Cunningham placed the Yaudheyas between Delhi and Karnāl (Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., XIV, p. 140; also Coins of Ancient India, p. 76).

² Fleet, No. 57.

³ On the significance of punch-marks see Spooner, Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1905-6, p. 153; Ibid., 1913-14, p. 220; Walsh, J.B.O.R.S., 1919, pp. 18-19.

⁴ D. R. Bhandarkar, Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1913-14, p. 226. On Coinage see also S. B. E., XI, Mahāsudassana Sutta, pp. 252 et seq.

have Śiva and a bull on the reverse.¹ The status of the feudatories shows great variations. In fact, there seem to have been several definite grades among them. In the Allāhābād Inscription Pratyantānripatis—frontier “kings” or chiefs—are higher than Sāmantas. Mahārājas are obviously higher than Rājas. Mahārājas and Mahāsāmantas seem to be of equal status. Both the titles are applied constantly to Samudrasena and his ancestors in an inscription² and to others elsewhere.³ A number of feudatories, in the grants issued by them on their own authority, refer to their feudatories who are therefore sub-feudatories of the emperor. The inscriptions of Mahārāja Hastin, for instance, expressly mention Gupta sovereignty and then proceed to address his own feudatories.⁴ It appears that only on acquiring a certain degree of importance could a feudatory be called a Mahārāja. One of the inscriptions makes it clear that after two generations in a family had extended the patrimony and consolidated their power, its third representative assumed the title of Mahārāja. The rise to such a position was duly signalled by a sort of consecration and blessed and acknowledged by the suzerain lord. The Mahārāja Droṇasinhha was installed “by besprinkling” by his paramount sovereign, ‘the sole lord of the circumference of the whole earth,’ and the glory of his new position “was purified by his great liberality.” Judging from the date of the inscription of his grandson (571-72 A.D.), this event must have taken place during the latter days of the Gupta Empire.⁵ It was probably on such occasions that feudatories sometimes ventured to celebrate

¹ Rapson, *Indian Coins*, No. 15.

² Fleet, No. 80.

³ *Ibid.*, Nos. 3, 10, 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Nos. 21, 22. See also *Ind. Ant.*, XVII, 1888, p. 183.

⁵ Fleet, No. 88.

a sort of *Aśvamedha*.¹ Vassals specially favoured of the suzerain were given further honorific titles such as *Sāmanta-ctāmaṇi*.² Whether these additional titles were hereditary during this period is not clear but the ordinary feudal designations are always transmitted from father to son. Smaller feudatories, those bearing only the title of *Rāja*, also make grants, though, judging from the paucity of their inscriptions, not with the same frequency.³ It appears that feudatories were sometimes employed in positions of high trust under the suzerain. The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of the Mahārāja Saṅkṣobha records that the Mahārāja Hastin was placed in charge of eighteen forest chiefships.⁴ The grant of Jayabhaṭa II mentions *Sāmantas* in the same breath with *Bhogikas* and *Viṣayapatis* who are undoubtedly government officers.⁵ The line between officers of state and feudatories sometimes grows faint and official and feudatory titles are indiscriminately applied to many personages.⁶ From another inscription it appears that boundary pillars were sometimes set up to mark off the territories of different feudatories.⁷ The king often entered into matrimonial relations with feudatories as with ministers.⁸ The feudatories sometimes attended upon the king. The Kahaun Stone Pillar Inscription of the year 480-81 A.D. speaks of the tranquil reign of Skandagupta whose hall of audience (*Upasthānabhūmi*) was shaken by the wind caused by the falling down (in the act of performing obeisance) of the heads of a hundred *Nripatis* or feudatory rulers.⁹ In the language of etiquette the relations between

¹ Ibid., No. 56. Ep. Ind., X, No. 13.

² Fleet, Nos. 48, 49, 50.

³ Ibid., Nos. 40, 41.

⁴ Fleet, No. 25, see also Nos. 16, 19.

⁵ Ind. Ant., V, p. 114.

⁶ Ind. Ant., V, 105; II, 114.

⁷ Fleet, No. 22.

⁸ Ibid., Nos. 12, 55. Ep. Ind., XV, No. 4.

⁹ Fleet, No. 14. Also Bhau Daji, J. B. B. R. A. S., Vol. VIII,

the suzerain and the vassal are summed up in the expression *Pādānudhyāta*, "meditating on the feet of—," which emphasises reverence and obedience. The same term is used to typify the attitude of a *Mahārāja* or *Mahārājādhirāja* towards his parents, preceptors or other superiors.¹ In almost all of the numerous "perpetual," "eternal" grants of villages recorded in the inscriptions, the inhabitants concerned are commanded to obey the grantees. The grants being also expressly free from the entrance of government police and soldiers, it seems that the grantee was expected to arrange for defence and maintenance of order. Since most of the grantees were *Brāhmanas*, some of them might not have discharged these duties by themselves. Perhaps they left them to chief persons of the village. But in any case, this system of grants which are avowedly hereditary, which, in fact, are expected to last "until the sun and moon endure," and the resumption of which is cursed with the heaviest imprecations, would introduce an element of feudalism at the bottom. These small landholders, however, could easily be controlled in the case of any untoward incidents. The great feudatories might have been more difficult to manage. Vassalage faded by insensible degrees into practical independence. It is significant that the *Allāhābād* Inscription counts the king of Ceylon, undoubtedly independent, as a sort of vassal.

From the Gupta period onwards, an independent king—generally a real emperor—almost always styles himself

The Emperor's
Titles.

Parameśvara, supreme lord, *Mahārājādhirāja*, supreme king of *Mahārājas*, and *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, the most worshipful one.² Sometimes he adds other equally imposing titles—*Samrāt*,³ *Ekādhirāja*,⁴ *Rājādhirāja*, *Cakravartin*,

¹ Fleet, Nos. 3, 26, Ep. Ind., X, No. 12, Ind. Ant., XII, p. 249.

² For the Gupta period, *i.e.*, Fleet, Nos. 1, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 32, 46, etc.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 32.

Paramadaivata.¹ The later Godval Plates of Vikramāditya I, A.D. 674, state that one of his ancestors Pulakesin I acquired the title of Parameśvara by defeating Harṣavardhana but in the same sentence Pulakesin's father is also called Parameśvara. So in the Deccan, too, the title must be held to be the ordinary symbol of independence and suzerainty.² The Mankuwar Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta, of the Gupta year 129 (=448-49 A.D.), calls him only a Mahārāja.³ But this solitary instance hardly constitutes an exception to the general rule of titles. If it is not an error, it may mean that the Gupta ruler had been forced at the time to bow to his enemies who, as we know for certain from other inscriptions, assailed him on all sides and reduced him to a sorry plight. He might have been compelled temporarily to acknowledge the overlordship of others. The character of the imperial titles was so well recognised that the Hun ruler Torāmaṇa styled himself a Mahārājādhirāja.⁴ His son Mihirakula, however, does not style himself so, perhaps because at the time of the inscription in question, he did not retain his independence.⁵ Later, sometimes the shorter form Bhaṭṭāraka was coupled with Mahārājādhirāja.⁶ In point of titles, the practice of the north was the same as that of the Deccan and the south.⁷ In later times, the title Bhaṭṭāraka could be used of feudatories,⁸ but such instances are not common. One of the Basāḍh seals has Yuvarāja Bhaṭṭāraka, which may mean the chief minister of the heir-apparent but which may also imply that the title

¹ Ibid., No. 39. Kumāragupta's Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions, Ep. Ind., XV, 113.

² Ep. Ind., X, No. 2.

³ Fleet, No. 11.

⁴ Ibid., No. 36.

⁵ Ibid., No. 37.

⁶ Ind. Ant., III, p. 26; IX, p. 172.

⁷ Ibid., X, p. 103, 139; XI, p. 124.

⁸ Ibid., IX, p. 168; XIV, p. 98.

Bhaṭṭāraka was sometimes applied to the heir-apparent. The consort of a suzerain was called Mahādevī but the title was occasionally applied also to the consort of a Mahārāja.¹

As usual, the king personally conducted the administration. He transacted the business of the state even on tours, when he was accompanied by some of his ministers.² Towards his subjects he adopts a paternal attitude.

The Govern-
ment and people.

Most of the inscriptions discovered record grants to Brāhmaṇas, to groups of scholars or students, or to religious and charitable institutions. So numerous were the gifts that, as the Bihār Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta indicates, a special officer Agrahārika was deputed to arrange them.³ The example of the king was followed by his relations, ministers, feudatories and even ordinary subjects. The character of the endowments may be illustrated by a few typical instances. The Bhitārī Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta records the allotment of a village for the maintenance of a temple in which the king had installed an image of Śaṅgīn or Viṣṇu.⁴ There are gifts dedicated to Satras, charitable alms-houses or halls.⁵ Ādityasena's mother built a religious college or monastery.⁶ The Sāñchi Stone Inscription of Candragupta's reign records the grant of a village or an area of land and a sum of money to the Ārya Saṁgha at the Buddhist Vihāra of Kākanādabotā for the purpose of feeding mendicants or maintaining lamps.⁷ The

¹ Fleet, Nos. 4, 10, 12, 26, 44, 45, 46, 47, 80. For the detailed treatment of the titles and feudal-federal conditions in later times, see *infra*.

² Fleet, No. 6.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 7. Also Nos. 8, 9, 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 42, also No. 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 5.

Udayagiri Cave Inscription commemorates the excavation of a cave as a Śaiva temple.¹ A high personage, apparently a minister of Samudragupta, erected a Yūpa or sacrificial pillar.² Grants were sometimes made to groups as large as a thousand persons.³ Some of the endowments were permanently beneficial to the community at large. A queen caused a tank to be excavated.⁴ Mayūrākṣa, a minister, built a temple of Viṣṇu, another of the Divine Mothers, and other temples and halls of the gods, and at the same time supplied the city of his residence with wells for drinking water, pleasure-gardens, irrigation wells, tanks and various kinds of causeways.⁵ A private person built a satra or charity-hall and a pillar.⁶ Other endowments would be mainly ornamental. Mâtriviṣṇu, a Mahârāja and his brother Dhanyaviṣṇu, erected a column called Dhvajastambha, flag-staff, of the God Viṣṇu.⁷ All the grants, whether by suzerains or feudatories, are meant to be eternal in duration. The grantor calls upon all his feudatories, officers and people to respect the endowment. He exhorts his descendants and successors to leave it unmolested. A few verses from Vyâsa are almost invariably quoted to consign all disturbers of grants to 60,000 years of hell and to promise their respecters an equal span of bliss in heaven. Every śâsana or charter, as the deed is called,⁸ is at pains to limit the boundaries of the areas of land-grants and to specify the accompanying

¹ Ibid., No. 6.

² Ibid., No. 12.

³ Ibid., No. 55.

⁴ Ibid., Nos. 44, 45.

⁵ Ibid., No. 17.

⁶ Ibid., No. 10.

⁷ Ibid., No. 19. For other grants of feudatories, Nos. 16, 21, 22, 25, 27-31, 35, etc.

⁸ Ibid., i.e., No. 21.

privileges, in the most exact manner. Grants could be made out of any areas.¹ Sometimes only part of the revenue of the area alienated was assigned to the grantee.²

The exigencies of endowments serve to give an idea of at least some of the chief officers under the Guptas.

Chief officers. Numerous inscriptions mention *Senâpati*,

Mahâsenâpati, *Balâdhyakṣa* or *Balâdhikṛita*,³ *Mahâbalâdhyakṣa* or *Mahâbalâdhikṛita*, who are all military officers and who perhaps represent four different grades of them. There are two other high military officers—*Bhaṭāśvapati*, commander of infantry and cavalry, and *Kaṭuka*, commander of the elephant corps. On the financial side of the military administration was the *Raṇabhāṇḍagârâdhikaraṇa*, chief of the treasury of the war

Military. office, who is mentioned in the *Basâḍh* seals. Another minister who had some-

thing to do with military policy was the *Samdhivigrahika* or *Mahâsamdhivigrahika*, a sort of foreign secretary. It is not clear whether the two terms are used for the same officer or whether the addition of the adjective *Mahâ* indicates superiority of rank. In the latter case, the *Samdhivigrahika* is the assistant of the *Mahâsamdhivigrahika*. Three other variations in this designation are met with—*samdhivigrahin*, *samdhivigrahâdhikṛita*, *samdhivigrahâdhikaraṇâdhikṛita*. *Camûpa* is another military officer, perhaps lower than those mentioned above.

In the Gupta age, as in other periods of ancient Indian history, the same officers might perform various functions.

Chief Judges. There was no real separation of civil and military, executive, judicial and revenue functions. But there were officials who were

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 38.

² *Ibid.*, No. 31.

³ The *Basâḍh* seals also mention the form *Balâdhikaraṇa* (*Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv.*, 1903-4, pp. 101 et seq.).

occupied predominantly with only one side of the administration. The chief judicial officers are designated Daṇḍanāyaka, Mahādaṇḍanāyaka, Sarvadaṇḍanāyaka or Mahāsarvadaṇḍanāyaka. Other variations of the designation are Daṇḍādhipa, Daṇḍanātha, Daṇḍābhinātha, Daṇḍādhipati, Daṇḍeśa, Daṇḍeśvara. Daṇḍa also means an army in Sanskrit literature. There are inscriptions which equate Daṇḍābhinātha with Camūpa and thus make him undoubtedly a military commander. But, on the whole, judicial officers are meant. Possibly, Daṇḍanāyaka, Mahādaṇḍanāyaka, Sarvadaṇḍanāyaka and Mahāsarvadaṇḍanāyaka represent different grades in the judicial hierarchy.

One of the inscriptions (Fleet, No. 55) mentions Sarvādhyakṣas, Superintendents of all, but it is not clear whether they are central or provincial officers. The Basāḍh seals mention Daṇḍapāsādhikaraṇa who is probably the chief

Other chief
officers.

of police. Numerous inscriptions mention Dūtaka, Dūta or Ājñādāpaka who communicates royal commands to officers and people concerned. But this office seems often to have been combined with others. In the Gupta Inscriptions the Mahāsamdhivigrahika generally acts as the Dūtaka. On some occasions the Dūtaka is dispensed with. The king may declare his commands to officers through his own mouth (svamukhājñā).¹

¹ All these officers are mentioned frequently in the Gupta Inscriptions (Fleet). The other authorities are the Basāḍh seals (Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1903-4, pp. 101-20). The spot of the finds probably represents the home of a maker of seals as D. R. Bhandarkar conjectured from the large number of officials, prominent personages and communities whose seals were made (Ind. Ant., 1912, p. 3). On the official designations see also Ind. Ant., IV, p. 175; VII, p. 70; VIII, p. 20; X, p. 252. The Dūtaka or Ājñādāpaka is also designated Ājñamahāmabhattara or by similar other titles (Ind. Ant., VI, p. 124; XIII, p. 123; XIV, pp. 160-61).

There are a number of household officers. The Pratihâra or the Mahâpratihâra was the chief guard or usher of the palace. The Vinayâsura announced Palace officers. and conducted visitors to the king. The functions of the sthapâlisamrât are not clear but he seems to have been the Superintendent of the host of employees in the women's apartments, that is, in the harem. The Pratinartaka was the bard or herald.¹

The king's territory was divided into a number of Bhuktis or provinces, a Bhukti into Viṣayas or districts, a Viṣaya into Grâmas or villages. The governor of The Provinces. a Bhukti bears various designations in the epigraphic records—Bhogika, Bhogapati, Goptâ, Uparika-mahârâja, Râjasthâniya²—which convey some idea of his duties. Bhukti or Bhogika has fiscal implications and shows that the provinces were also meant to be fiscal divisions. Uparika-mahârâja has even a more pronounced fiscal significance. Goptâ means protector and, doubtless, the governor was expected to protect the people under his charge. The term Râjasthâniya shows that the governor was considered to be a viceroy, representative of the king. Royal princes were sometimes appointed to this office.³ The officer called Kumârâmâtya was most probably the minister of a prince-viceroy. Mahâkumârâmâtya may be an honorary synonym thereof, or a higher grade in the same office.

¹ Fleet, Nos. 26, 39. Basâdh seals, Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1903. pp. 102 et seq.

² Fleet, No. 14. Dâmodarpur Copper Plates, Ep. Ind., XV, No. 7. Fleet, No. 14, mentions the qualities desirable in a governor of a province or a ruler of a city. The grants of Dadda II (477-78 A.D.—495 A.D.) from Bharukaccha, modern Baruch, substitute Râṣṭrapati for Bhogika. Râṣṭra had now acquired partially a fiscal significance (Ind. Ant., XVII, 1888, p. 183).

³ Fleet, No. 14.

The provincial governor had a number of subordinates called Tanniyuktakas. A province had a number of revenue officers. The Basādh seals mention the chief of the Uparikas of Tirabhukti.

The Dāmodarpur Copper Plates indicate that the king appointed provincial governors and that the latter selected

The District. Viṣayapatis or heads of districts. The

Sūrat Plates of Vyāghrasena, of the year 490-91 A.D., indicate that āhāra was another name for Viṣāya.¹ In a slightly later record, the Copper Plate Grant of Budhagupta, an Āyukta is mentioned as a Viṣayapati.² It seems to imply that an inferior officer had risen by merit or favour to the headship of a district. A district officer had his Adhiṣṭhāna or headquarters in a town. In the Adhiṣṭhāna he had his Adhikaraṇa—office and probably court. He had a large secretariat, consisting of Kāyasthas or scribes, headed by the Prathama Kāyastha. It seems he was expected to maintain close touch with important sections of the people. The Dāmodarpur Copper Plate Inscriptions seem to refer to a sort of advisory council which included a Nagaraśreṣṭhin, a principal citizen; Prathamakulika, representing the craft-guilds, and Sārthavāha, probably representing the trade-guilds.

The lowest administrative division, the village, was under a Grāmika.³ How he was appointed we are not told.

Probably, heredity, informal village opinion and government approval were jointly

responsible for his selection. Henceforward, the inscriptions constantly mention Mahattaras, elders of a village, who are addressed in the grants. It is possible, but there is only negative evidence to support the hypothesis, that this

¹ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 21.

² Ep. Ind., XV, p. 138.

³ Fleet, No. 22.

represents a fresh development in village administration. There is no evidence of any village councils in the north. But the Mahattaras seem to be associated in an informal manner with the Grāmika in the administration of village affairs. The Dāmodarpur Plates mention Aṣṭakulādhikarāṇa, which is difficult to explain but which probably refers to representatives of families, who are likely to have been consulted. There seems to have been a village accountant called Talvāṭaka.¹

Towns seem to have had an administrative machinery of their own. The officer in charge of a town is called

Drāṅgika.² The term, derived from

Towns.

Udraṅga, has fiscal associations. It is

possible that the Drāṅgika was supposed to be as much a fiscal officer as anything else and collected the dues from merchants and others. The town-officer seems to have been appointed by the provincial governor. In one of the inscriptions a viceroy appoints his own son to the charge of a city.³ Here the young officer becomes very popular with his wards, thanks to his smiling countenance, freedom of conversation, inquiries about welfare and to his habit of conferring honours and presents on the people. On the bursting of a lake, he offered sacrifices to the gods, and built an embankment 100 cubits in length, 68 in breadth and of seven(?) men's height, after "an immeasurable expenditure of wealth." The city-officer is expected to be the leader of the people. Besides these sets of officials whose location is clear, there are numerous others who seem to be associated indiscriminately with the central, provincial and district administrations.

¹ Fleet, *e.g.*, Nos. 46, 38. Ep. Ind., XV, No. 7.

² Fleet, No. 38.

³ Ibid., No. 14.

There are many police officers in evidence—*Daṇḍa-pāśika* (policeman), *Daṇḍika* (chastiser), *Cauroddharapika*

(officer apprehending thieves).¹ *Cāṭas* The Police. and *Bhāṭas* also investigated crime.

Thus the *Sûrat* plates of *Mahārāja Vyāghrasena*, of the year 490-91 A.D., lay down that the small piece of land granted is not to be entered by *Cāṭas* or *Bhāṭas* unless in order to arrest robbers or persons guilty of high treason.² On the other hand, a later writer *Lallā Dikṣita*, commenting on the *Mricchakaṭika*,³ explains *Cāṭa* as *Kṣudraviṣaya-bhoktā*—the officer of a small district. It will appear that the term had different meanings at different places. Later it came to mean a thief or a bad character.

The inscriptions yield some details about the fiscal administration. The land seems to have been surveyed

and measured and the holdings, their Fiscal Officers. boundaries and occupants recorded. The surveyors and measurers were called *Pramātri*, and those who fixed boundaries were designated *Simāpradātri*. The cases arising from these processes seem to come before officers called *Nyāyakaraṇikas*.⁴ The *Uparika* mentioned in the *Bihār Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta*⁵ seems to be another revenue officer concerned probably with the tax called *Uparikara*.⁶ The *Dhruvādhikaraṇa* seems to be a revenue superintendent.⁷ The *Utkhetayitā* is a similar dignitary.⁸ The exigencies of land-revenue seem to be chiefly responsible for the growth of an elaborate record

¹ Fleet, Nos. 33, 46.

² Ep. Ind., XI, No. 21.

³ Ed. Godbole, Bombay, 1896, p. 223.

⁴ Fleet, No. 33. Ep. Ind., XII, p. 75.

⁵ Fleet, No. 12.

⁶ *Infra*.

⁷ Fleet, Nos. 33, 12.

⁸ Ep. Ind., XII, p. 75.

department. The Pustapāla who is mentioned in the Dāmodarpur Plates is the protector, that is, the keeper of books. Akṣapaṭalika or keeper of records and Mahākṣapaṭalika or great keeper of records seem to be higher officers in the same class.¹ Karaṇika who has charge of Karaṇas or documents seems to be a registrar.² The draftsmen are called Karṭri or Śāsayitri.³ In the Dāmodarpur Copper Plates I—III, they are expected to be familiar with holdings and boundaries and ever ready to report to the government.

Besides those chiefly concerned with land-revenue there were officers who managed other heads of the income of the state. The Śaulkika seems to be in charge of customs and tolls.⁴ The Gaulmika seems to be entrusted with forests and the income therefrom and perhaps also forts.⁵

The royal treasure seems to be in charge of a class of officers called Bhāṇḍāgārādhikṛitas.⁶ There are a large number of subordinate employees such as *Miscellaneous officers.* Āyuktapurūṣas⁷ and Vinīyuktakas, the latter being inferior to the former in status.⁸ Divīras and Lekhakas are the terms applied to clerks. Perhaps there were several grades of them.⁹

It appears that from the fiscal point of view the land was divided, broadly speaking, into that fit for cultivation and otherwise. Grants are generally made according to the Bhūmichidra Nyāya.

Bühler discovered that the term occurs in the Vaiśyādhya of Yādavaprakāśa's Vaijayanti, verse 18, where it is explained

¹ Fleet, Nos. 89, 90.

² Ibid., No. 55.

³ Ibid., No. 88.

⁴ Ibid., No. 12.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ep. Ind., XII, p. 75.

⁷ Fleet, No. 1.

⁸ Ibid., No. 88.

⁹ Ibid., Nos. 27, 80.

as *Kṛiṣya योग्यabhūḥ*—lands fit for agriculture. It appears that there was a recognised fiscal code applicable to land of one or both the descriptions and that it prescribed the amount of the various dues.¹

The Gupta Inscriptions bear out the inference suggested by the *Dharma Śāstras* and *Arthaśāstras* that the number of taxes was very large in ancient India. Unfortunately, some of

the terms used are obscure. The inscriptions seem to assume that they were familiar to all. But they occur rarely in literature. The dictionaries are sometimes silent on them and sometimes contradict one another. Almost every grant is made with the *Udraṅga* (*Sodraṅga*). Some scholars have taken it to mean boundary or something like it. But the context supports the view that it was a species of revenue. Bühler drew attention to the fact that in the *Śāśvatakoṣa* (ed. Zachariaes, pp. xxix, 260) *Udraṅga* is explained as *Uddhāra* and *Udgrantha* (*Udgrāha*) and thus seems to mean the share of the produce usually collected by the king.² It is generally mentioned at the head of all dues in the inscriptions. Probably, it refers to the chief tax. Another term which is mentioned quite as frequently and, in general, immediately after *Udraṅga*, is *Uparikara*. A grant of land is usually made *Soparikara* (with the *Uparikara*). A few scholars have taken it to refer to a boundary or some variety of land but, most probably, it refers to another species of dues. Fleet held it to be a tax levied on cultivators who had no proprietary rights in the soil. Miscellaneous dues were levied under numerous heads. Thus the *Poonā Plates* of the *Vākāṭaka* Queen *Prabhāvatī Gupta*, daughter of *Candragupta II* and wife of *Rudrasena II*, speak of the claims of the state on pasturage, hides, charcoal, mines,

¹ For the occurrence of *Bhūmichidra Nyāya*, Fleet, No. 31.

² *Ind. Ant.*, XII, p. 189, note.

purchase of fermenting drugs, hidden treasures, deposits, abundance of milk and flowers, succession of cattle.¹ In several inscriptions reference is made to Dhānya and Hiranya as heads of state dues. The former seems to be some special kind of contribution in grain, while the latter, which means gold, undoubtedly pertains to right of the state to gold and probably also other mines. Vāta, another due, defies explanation but Bhūta, which is often mentioned with it, is probably a tax on what is withered. Another source of revenue was the occasional contributions for the royal army, militia or police. Along with the enumeration of exemptions from taxation, it is stated in grant after grant that the plots of land in question are not to be entered by Cāṭas and Bhāṭas. Fleet interpreted the last two terms to mean irregular and regular troops. Others have taken Cāṭa to mean a thief or robber but it makes no sense to state that particular pieces of land are not to be entered by thieves or robbers. That command would be of universal application. In no case could there be any ground for making such a statement along with exemptions from taxation. Cāṭa probably refers to a sort of police force. From the fiscal point of view, the importance of these provisions is that they indicate a distinct source of revenue in the form of levies. It will appear that the petty dues, particularly, those in kind, charged from a village went to pay the village headman and other local officers. Manu (VII, 199) says that the salary of a village headman should ordinarily be those articles which the villagers ought to furnish daily to the king such as food, drink, fuel.² Viṣṭika is forced labour which was counted among the regular royal dues. One of the commonest features of ancient Indian grants is that the pieces of land granted are

¹ Ep. Ind., XV, No. 4.

² For the occurrence of fiscal terms, Fleet, Nos. 3, 8, 21, 22, 31, etc.

declared free from the obligation of supplying forced labour. The grants of feudatories, too, contain that provision.¹ Daśāparādhāḥ refers to fines levied for ten offences, *viz.*, (a) three offences of the body—*theft, murder and adultery*, (b) four offences of speech—*harsh, untruthful, libellous, and pointless words*, and (c) three offences of mind—*coveting other's property, thinking of wrong, and devotion to what is not true*. This traditional classification throws little light on the actual administration of justice. Thinking could hardly have been punished. Murder would have carried a higher penalty than fines. The term daśāparādhāḥ is only a generic name for sins and in its administrative sense, only means judicial fines in general. However, it definitely proves that justice was one of the recognised sources of revenue and, as such, could be alienated to favourite grantees.

Tribute and presents from some of the feudatories must be reckoned among the sources of the suzerain's income. Samudragupta's Allāhābād Inscription records in a tone of pride that feudatories sought to gratify the emperor by paying various 'taxes' to him.²

The internal government of the feudatories themselves resembled that of the suzerain. Several inscriptions show that hereditary Mahārājas like Hastin had their own Amātyas or ministers, Saṁdhivigrahikas, Dūtakas, Bhogikas, Viṣayapatis, Uparikas, etc.³

Numerous inscriptions show that in the government of the suzerain, as in that of feudatories, two or more offices were often combined in the same hands. The Kumārāmātya,

¹ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 21.

² Fleet, No. 1.

³ Fleet, Nos. 21—23, 27—31. These inscriptions expressly mention Gupta suzerainty.

Samdhivigrahika and Dātaka, for instance, might be the same person.¹ In the inscription of a feudatory Bhogika and Amātya are the same man.² On the other hand, an office could be split up between two persons. Sometimes the same ruler has more than one Dātaka at the same time.³

Another fact which epigraphic testimony establishes beyond doubt is that officials were often chosen from the same families and that offices sometimes became hereditary under the suzerain as well as under the feudatories. In the

Official families.

Karmadaṇḍa Inscription of Kumāragupta of the year 436-37 A.D., Prithiviṣeṇa, the Kumārāmātya and subsequently the Mahābalādhikṛita of the king is the son of Śikharaśvāmin who was the Kumārāmātya of Candragupta II.⁴ In another inscription a son succeeds his father in office.⁵ The sons of high officers could be well provided for at court. Hariṣeṇa, the author of the Prasasti on the Allāhābād Inscription and a favourite of the king, was the son of a Mahādaṇḍanāyaka.⁶ In an inscription of Mahārāja Hastin a Samdhivigrahika is the son of a Bhogika who himself was the son of a Bhogika.⁷

As in the previous epoch, the economic life of the community was partly regulated by guilds. The Mandasor

Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta and

Guilds.

Bandhavarman records that a number of silk weavers migrated from the Lāṭa Viṣaya (central and southern Gujarāt) into the centre of Daśapura. Some of them adopted other occupations while those who adhered to their original craft constituted themselves into a guild

¹ Fleet, *en passant*.

² Ibid., No. 28.

³ Ibid., No. 30.

⁴ Ep. Ind., X, No. 15.

⁵ Fleet, No. 6.

⁶ Ibid., No. 1.

⁷ Ibid., No. 21.

which attained great prosperity. During the governorship of Bandhuvarman this guild built a temple of the sun (437-38 A.D.) and a generation later (473-74 A.D.) the same guild repaired it. We are told that the kings treated the guilds like their sons.¹ Another inscription refers to a guild of oilmen and hints at the possibility of their moving away elsewhere.² The Basâḍh seals show that many guilds had seals of their own.³

The system of administration which prevailed under the Imperial Guptas persisted throughout the days of the decline of the empire and also after its fall. Here and there were some variations in titles and administrative details but

After the
Gupta Empire.

the framework remained exactly the same. A few of the important inscriptions of the interval between the Guptas and the Vardhanas may be passed in rapid review. The Khoh Copper Plate Inscription shows how offices might rotate in the same families. The father and grandfather of the Mahâsaṁdhivigrahika had been Bhogikas. The grandfather is also given the title of Amâtya or minister. Here are two Dâtakas, one of them being the Mahâbalâdhikṛita.⁴ Another inscription of the same feudatory, of the year 533-34 A.D., mentions the usual offices and fiscal arrangements. Like others, it emphasises that the inhabitants should obey the grantees.⁵ The Betul Plates of Saṁkṣobha, of the year 518-19 A.D., from the modern Central Provinces show a line of hereditary Parivrâjaka Mahârâjas, who owed allegiance to Guptas, exercising overlordship over a number of forest chiefships. One of the Mahârâjas prides himself on establishing the Varṇâśrama-

¹ Fleet, No. 18.

² Ibid., No. 6.

³ Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1903-4, pp. 102 et seq.

⁴ Fleet, No. 30.

⁵ Ibid., No. 31.

dharma.¹ In the Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman, the members of a single family occupy several high offices and one of them constructs a large well for popular use. Here, curiously enough, Yaśodharman is only called Janendra.² Another stone-pillar inscription records that a column was erected for the purpose of inscribing a laudation of Yaśodharman's power and glory.³ The Chamnak Copper Plate Inscription of the Mahārāja Pravarasena II shows how suzerains and feudatories intermarried. Here the charter is written by the Senâpati.⁴ The Siwâni Copper Plate Inscription of the same ruler records that he performed four Aśvamedha sacrifices. Evidently, the ceremony was now losing its supreme significance. The privileges conferred with the grant are specific and throw light on contemporary fiscal arrangements. The village granted to some priests "is not to be entered by the regular troops or by the umbrella-bearers; it does not carry with it (the right to) cows and bulls in succession (of production), or to the abundance of flowers and milk, or to the pasturage, hides and charcoal, or to the mines for the purchase of salt in a moist state; it is entirely free from all (obligation of) forced labour; it carries with it the hidden treasures and deposits, and the kṛipta and upakṛipta." The last two terms are obscure. But the inscription suffices to give an idea of the petty dues levied, probably in kind, and the state monopolies. Needless to say, the grant is to be eternal and hereditary. All protection was to be extended to its holders, no hindrance of any kind was to be offered to them.⁵ In the Ganeśgaḍ Plates of Dhruvasena I, of the year 526-27 A.D., from

¹ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 28.

² Fleet, No. 85. On Yaśodharman's Exploits against the Huns, J. J. Modi, J. B. R. A. S., XXIV, pp. 530-92; also Asiatic Papers, pp. 293-349.

³ Fleet, No. 33.

⁴ Ibid., No. 55.

⁵ Ibid., No. 56.

Bhāvanagara state, two brothers are big feudatories,—Mahārāja and Mahāsāmanta—and a third one holds the post of Senāpati which he passes on to his son. The feudal dominion has the usual administrative machinery. Drāṅgikas are the town-officers with whom are associated Mahattaras, elders. It appears that, as in the village, the elders were informally consulted on administrative matters in towns. Sthānādhikarāṅgikas are the police-officers in charge of Sthānas (police stations), from which the medieval and modern term *thānā* is derived. The nomenclature is interesting. In this inscription the fiscal officers and arrangements are the same as in the foregoing ones.¹ Two other grants of Dhruvasena I from Pālitānā introduce big feudatories, Mahāsāmanta Mahārājas.² In the Pālitānā Plates of Sindhāditya, of the year 574 A.D., also appears a line of hereditary Sāmanta Mahārājas—big feudatories. Among those to whom the Śāsana is addressed are Rājasthānīyas, Drāṅgikas, Mahattaras, riders on elephants and horses who seem to form part of the army.³ The Pālitānā Plates of Dharaśena II of the year 571 A.D. mention a few other officers but none which has not been already noticed.⁴ These grants prove that Kāthiāwāḍ had the same system of administration as the north. Gujarāt was quite in line. The Sunao Kala Plates of Saṅgamasīmha of the year 540-41 A.D., from Bharukaccha, modern Baruch, in Gujarāt, furnish an illustration. The Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja, though a feudatory, has a regular administrative system of the usual type. His Śāsana is addressed to Rājasthānīyas, Uparikas, Kumārāmātyas, Viṣayapatis, Drāṅgikas, Cāṭas, Bhaṭas and others. Ārakṣikas and Kulaputrakas are also mentioned. The former are probably

¹ Ep. Ind., III, No. 46.

² Ep. Ind., XVII, 7.

³ Ibid., XI, No. 2.

⁴ Ibid., XI, No. 5. See also No. 9.

police-officers. Kulaputrakas are probably not regular officials but merely representatives of families who were consulted by village and town-officers. There is a chamberlain Mahâpratihâra, while the Samdhivigrahika acts as Dûtaka. The fiscal system is the same as that of the Guptas. One of the privileges conferred on the grantee is that his area will not be entered by Câtas and Bhaṭas whose presence, obviously, was felt as a burden.¹ The foreign rulers who established themselves in India adapted themselves to the Hindu system. In the Eraṇ Stone Boar Inscription Torâmaṇa is called Mahârâjâdhirâja.² Elsewhere Torâmaṇa has the titles Śâhi and Jauval as well as Râjâdhirâja.³ Some of the coins of Mihirakula have the bull-emblem of Siva and the legend Jayatu Vriṣaḥ on the reverse.⁴

The shape which the Hindu administrative system assumed under the Guptas never left it afterwards. In the next seven centuries we meet with variations from place to place and time to time but the essentials are the same. From the administrative point of view the Gupta empire stands at the centre of ancient Indian history.

It is probably the institutions of the Gupta age which are reflected in the works of Kâlidâsa, the greatest of Hindu classical poets and dramatists. His date has long been a matter of acute controversy. There are still a few scholars who argue for the correctness of the tradition that he lived in the first century B.C. Again, a few are still inclined to place him in the sixth century A.D. But the general consensus of opinion, relying on internal literary and

¹ Ep. Ind., X, No. 16.

² Fleet, No. 36.

³ Ep. Ind., I, 29. See also Fleet, Coins and History of Torâmaṇa, Ind. Ant., XVIII, 1889, p. 225.

⁴ Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum, p. 236.

astronomical evidence, favours the 4th century A.D. as the earliest and the 5th as the latest date of the poet. This, at any rate, is at present the soundest working hypothesis. Kālidāsa is claimed by Kashmir, the Gangetic plains, Bengāl, the Deccan and even Ceylon. But if, as appears probable, his *Raghuvamśa* contains some veiled references to Gupta emperors, he may be presumed to have enjoyed the patronage of the Gupta court or at any rate to have come into contact with it. It may be that he spent some time at Ujjayini, the capital of Mālwā. Bhoja in his *Śrīṅgaraprakāśikā* says that Kālidāsa was sent on a political embassy to the Kuntala king. There is no contemporary record to check the statement but internal evidence certainly suggests that the poet lived in intimate touch with men and affairs at a court and was by no means a man of the cloister.¹

In his *Raghuvamśa* Kālidāsa accepts universal dominion as the ideal, the summum bonum of royalty. It is with real poetic fervour that in the fourth canto he describes Raghu's campaigns which bring the whole of India and regions beyond, under his sovereignty. A horse-sacrifice is performed with all the religious solemnities, dazzling

¹ On the date and locale of Kālidāsa, see Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 323-25; Keith, *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 81-82, *Sanskrit Drama*, pp. 143-47, also *J.R.A.S.*, 1909, pp. 433 et seq. Vikramāditya, the traditional patron of Kālidāsa, is identified with Candragupta II by R. G. Bhandarkar (*J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XX, p. 399) and with Skandagupta by D. R. Bhandarkar (*Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, 1926-27, Vol. VIII, Part II, pp. 200-204). Hoernle, *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, pp. 108 et seq., and H. P. Sāstrī, *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1916, p. 391, argue that Kālidāsa was a contemporary of Yaśodharman. R. D. Banerji, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, X, pp. 75-96, 364-71; K. G. Shankar (altering his former opinion), *Indian Historical Quarterly*, I, pp. 309-16; K. Cattopādhyāya, *Allāhābād University Studies*, II, 1926, pp. 79-170, argue for the first century B.C. On the subject see also K. B. Pathak, *J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XIX, pp. 89 et seq., *Ind. Ant.*, 1912, pp. 266-67; K. G. Shankar, *Journal of the Mythic Society*, VIII, pp. 273-92, IX, pp. 17-56; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, II, pp. 189-91; *Ind. Ant.*, LI, pp. 192-98; *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1920, p. 327; H. P. Sāstrī, *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1916, pp. 197 et seq.

splendour and right royal generosity. Yet annexation in the strict sense of the term is conspicuous by its absence. In the opening lines of the *Raghuvamśa*, the poet expressly refers to the Raghus as anxious to conquer *for the sake of glory*.¹ In the fourth canto he once remarks that Raghu deprived Mahendranātha of his glory (Śrī) but not of his territory (medini).² All this is in harmony with epigraphic data, but literature with rare exceptions seems to have been too conservative to recognise the grand high-sounding imperial titles which had come into vogue. It is content to apply the ordinary Sanskrit words Rāja, Nṛpa, Narendra, Bhūpati, etc., to all rulers. As a result, the distinction between suzerains and feudatories is never brought out so clearly as in the inscriptions. None the less, the number of small rulers and feudatories within the universal empire postulated by Kālidāsa is legion. They come in swarms to attend the sacrifices or court ceremonies. There are numbers of them at a svayamvara to win the hand of Indumatī. They are ready to war when they are passed over, one by one, in favour of Aja by the princess.³ In the fifteenth canto Rāma divides his kingdom among his sons and nephews. There is nothing in the inscriptions to support such a practice of the distribution of the realm but if it ever took place in any part of the country, it would further promote the feudal tendency.

In the very first canto of the *Raghuvamśa* Kālidāsa paints the ideal of royalty in terms of glowing eloquence.

Kings are to combine all physical and intellectual vigour with moral and spiritual

The king.

¹ *Raghuvamśa*, I, 7 (Yasase vijigṛhṣām). For Dilipa's horse-sacrifice, Canto III; for Rāma's horse-sacrifice, Canto XV. On the glorification of dominion, II, 50, in particular.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 43.

³ *Ibid.*, Canto VI.

excellence.¹ A little later he enunciates the doctrine of paternalism in so many words.² But the nineteenth and last canto seems to indicate that the ideal was not always translated into practice. Agnivarman entirely neglects the concerns of state and wastes his time, energy and wealth in luxury and vice. As the fifteenth and sixteenth cantos in particular show, kings usually lived in great splendour. They were generally fond of hunting.³ The Hindu ideal, however, as unfolded by Kālidāsa, deprecated over-attachment to worldly enjoyment and grandeur. The model kings abdicate in favour of their heirs-apparent and retire to the forest at the approach of old age. Raghu wants to follow the tradition of his predecessors and is persuaded only with the utmost difficulty by his weeping son to remain with him. Then the two share the crown and power.⁴ Daśaratha likewise prepares to instal his son Rāma on the throne and depart to the forest.⁵ The prince who is to receive a thorough education including instruction in Dhanurveda or archery⁶ should be installed Yuvarāja or heir-apparent during the lifetime of his father, as in the case of Raghu and his father Dilipa.⁷ As usual, an umbrella is the symbol of sovereignty.⁸ It is interesting to notice that in the last canto, on the death of a wicked king, his widow is recognised regent and ceremonies of inauguration are performed for the child in her womb. Everywhere in the *Raghuvamśa* a king has a chief minister and other

¹ Canto I. See also II, 16; III, 25; V. Canto XVII for Kuśa. Cf. Prāsasti of Hariṣeṇa on the Allāhābād Pillar.

² *Ibid.*, I, 24.

³ *Ibid.*, IX, 49, 53, etc.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII.

⁵ *Ibid.*, XII. See also XVIII.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 29—31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 35.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 47.

officers. A king should keep his counsels secret.¹ The land-revenue is fixed at one-sixth of the gross produce.² The king must enforce the social order. Râma slays a Śûdra who ventured to perform penances.³ Every king must also have a Purohita versed in Vedic lore as well as in Daṇḍanîti or science of government and able to ward off all supernal calamities and human misfortunes.⁴ In this connection, another work of Kâlidâsa, the Kumârasaṁbhava which moves above the earth, has an interesting passage. Bṛihaspati as chief minister is

The Kumâra-
saṁbhava.

said to be greater than all the thousand
ministers of a deliberative council.⁵ It

implies the existence of a chief minister and a huge court. The Meghadûta, the finest of Sanskrit lyrics, has little that is political.

Like the Raghuvamśa, Mâlavikâgnimitra, perhaps the first dramatic piece of Kâlidâsa, extols the ideal of universal sovereignty in its very first lines. It

Mâlavikâgni-
mitra.

lays down the precept that enemies
should be quickly extirpated but feuda-

tories are in evidence in its pages. There appear a number of border chieftains who often quarrel with one another and sometimes imprison each other's subjects. In the course of its incidents the play indicates that the king had a chief minister and a number of other ministers who held charge of different departments. Once the king is seen holding counsel with his minister in a lonely spot about the doings of the enemy. The Parivrâjikâ in Mâlavikâgnimitra testifies to the existence of female spies and recalls Kauṭalya. The play brings on

¹ Ibid., I, 19.

² Ibid., II, 66.

³ Ibid., XV.

⁴ Ibid., I, 60.

⁵ Kumârasaṁbhava, II, 80.

the stage the turmoils of a polygamous seraglio which, occasionally, must have reacted dangerously on the policy of the state. One or two points of etiquette are interesting. The sovereign must be approached with presents. Officers address him in the most flattering terms.¹

Vikramorvaśī, another dramatic piece of Kālidāsa, is feeble and disappointing. But its picture of the royal harem

Vikramorvaśī. is quite interesting, though it reveals nothing new. In the second Act, the king's time-table partly follows the Kauṭalyan model.

The Abhijñāna Śākuntala, the most charming product of the Hindu genius, has a few interesting political touches.

The Abhijñāna Śākuntala. The king is the protector of all—he ought to protect, adjudicate and chastise. He takes one-sixth of the produce of the soil in return for the functions he performs. He also receives one-sixth of the merits and demerits of his subjects. He ought to be the nearest of kin to all. The king, like a tall tree, has to bear the heat and brunt to shelter those under his charge. Royalty, like an umbrella in hand, makes more for inconvenience than for enjoyment.² At the same time in actual practice, the king was rather fond of hunting and would spend a long time over it.³ Hunting, in fact, is eulogised with real poetic fervour. He has a big harem which has its own politics and in which not every one is happy.⁴ He was not always easily accessible to the people. "Kings are not to be got at so easily," says a constable when the superintendent is late to return in the sixth Act. In his moods, the king could be arbitrary.

¹ Mālavikāgnimitra, tr. Tawney, pp. 1, 7—9, 29—31 in particular. For the royal sacrifice, supra, Ch. IX.

² Abhijñāna Śākuntala, Act V, Śloka 4—8.

³ Ibid., Act I.

⁴ Ibid., Act III, see the conversation of Duśyanta with Śākuntalā's friends.

In the sorrow of his personal bereavement, Duṣyanta forbids the vernal festival in the city.¹

The king duly published his commands. His orders are proclaimed throughout the city and their reception at the hands of the people is noted.² He himself administers justice. In the fifth Act, the king is seen rising from the court of justice for a bath. The royal court was held in the morning. To his hall does the superintendent take a suspect fisherman in the sixth Act. He had a number of officers, some of whom probably received a ring as their signet.³ In the sixth Act, the king unable to preside himself over the court one morning asks Āryapīśuna to take his place. There seems to be an officer charged with the administration of justice and religion. *Inter alia*, he looked to the interests of hermits, visited their groves and saw that their rites were free from obstruction. It is as such an officer that Duṣyanta chooses to reveal himself in the hermitage of Kanva. In the sixth Act, the minister is seen devoting considerable time to the preparation of a financial statement and presenting it to the king. The sixth Act also brings into view police officers in charge of the city and police constables. They are seen dragging a poor fisherman whose hands are tied behind his back. A little later they threaten him with death for his suspected theft.

Among court and household employees who appear on the stage in the fifth Act may be mentioned heralds, chamberlains, warders, and a jester, vidūṣaka, who is a sort of companion to the king. It may be remarked that priests are always received with respect at the court.

¹ Ibid., Act VI.

² Ibid., Act VI.

³ Ibid., Act I.

An incidental anecdote in the sixth Act shows that the property of those who died without heirs escheated to the state. A conscientious king would satisfy himself thoroughly of the absence of heirs before taking possession. Duśyanta, on inquiry learns that one of the widows of a childless shipwrecked merchant was pregnant. He gives a decree that the unborn child had a title to its father's property. He continues :

"Rather be it proclaimed that whoso'er
Of king Duśyanta's subjects be bereaved
Of any loved relation, and it be not
That his estates are forfeited for crimes
Duśyanta will himself to them supply
That kinsman's place in tenderest affection."

About the time of Kālidāsa flourished another dramatist who wrote the *Mricchakatikā*, which has a family resemblance with Bhāsa's *Cārudatta*. The work is ascribed to a king named Śādraka but the remarks on Śādraka in the play point to some court poet as its author. Śādraka himself, in spite of Konow's brilliant hypothesis, must remain a legendary figure.¹ Śādraka is represented by the *Sātra-dhāra* in the customary prologue as endowed with many of the qualities which the Hindu ideal of kingship demanded. He had knowledge, religious as well as secular. He was versed in the *Sāmaveda*, in mathematics and in arts. He was warlike and energetic and the delight of those who knew the Vedas.² The plot of the play displays a wicked brother-in-law of the king intimidating officers and the

¹ See the Introduction to Ryder's translation, styled *Little Clay Cart*, Harvard Oriental Series, No. 9. Also the introduction (pp. 5-9) of the Bombay edition of Raddi and Paranipe who refer the play to the first century B.C. For additional criticism, Sylvain Lévi, *Théâtre Indien*, p. 208; Tawney, *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 910; *Ibid.*, 1909, p. 147; Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, 128-42.

² *Mricchakatikā*, Act I.

court. The picture of the court itself is interesting. Witnesses are summoned and cross-examined; the final judgment is pronounced by the judge who is supposed to represent the king. In Act IX, the magistrate asks the beadle to go to the court-room and make the seats ready (p. 132). When the seats are ready, the judge enters, accompanied by a gild warden, a clerk and others. The judge laments the difficulties of his position:—

“ In court-rooms even the righteous with lies !
Hide their offences from judicial eyes.”

He laments the difficulty of obtaining perfectly true evidence (p. 133). However, the beadle conducts the judge to the court-room. The king's brother-in-law wants to present his case first of all. The judge thinks that the court will be very busy otherwise that day and, accordingly, sends a message through the beadle, “Leave us for to-day. Your suit cannot be considered” (p. 134). Saṁsthānaka says, “I will have this judge removed and another judge appointed.” The remark is communicated by the beadle to the judge who is frightened into taking up the case that very day. Saṁsthānaka is seen almost making fun of the court (p. 135). Among witnesses an old woman is called (p. 137). The defendant and the plaintiff are allowed to cross-examine one another, while the court-officers examine both (p. 142). In the course of the proceedings, Saṁsthānaka is once rebuked by the judge (p. 143). No ordeals are employed in this particular case but that they were frequently resorted to is clear from a later speech of the condemned man, Cārudatta. He complains:—

“ If you had proved my conduct by the fire,
By water, poison, scales and thus had known,
That I deserved that saws should bite my bone.”

(p. 152).

The four ordeals mentioned here are the same as occur in the law-books. To revert to the court scene, when Cārudatta is adjudged guilty of murder, he is at once taken into custody by the guardsmen. But the final order on his fate comes from the king, Pālaka, who decrees, "Inasmuch as he killed Vasantasenā for such a trifle, these same jewels shall be hung above his neck, the drum shall be beaten, he shall be conducted to the southern burying ground, and there impaled." The king adds "whoever else shall commit such a crime, shall be punished with a like dreadful doom" (p. 151). The details of the theatrical setting and the terrible punishment have some relation to facts. The execution scene where the temporary tragedy reaches its height (p. 153) may not be equally realistic but is none the less interesting. Act IX speaks of treacherous ministers who involve both princes and peoples in promiscuous ruin. In the tenth and last Act misrule and oppression lead to a revolution resulting in the death of the king.

Another outstanding figure in the history of the Sanskrit drama, Bhāsa, can be noticed as conveniently here as anywhere else. T. Gaṇapati Śāstri who

Bhāsa, recently discovered and edited his plays, ascribed them to the seventh or eighth century B.C. But it has lately been argued that they are not the product of a single mind, that at most they can only be said to belong to one school and that they took shape about the 7th century A.D. Others will bring the date as low as the eleventh century A.D. On weighing the internal evidence and considering the arguments advanced to support the various hypotheses, one is inclined to think that the plays were composed by the same author sometime between the 4th and the 6th century A.D. In the seventh century A.D. Bāṇabhaṭṭa mentioned Bhāsa in the introductory verses of *Harṣacarita* and placed his name before that of Kālidāsa.

It is uncertain whether the order of names is merely accidental or whether it implies chronological sequence.¹ But it is impossible not to attach some weight to the arguments of those who hold Bhāsa to be a forerunner of Kālidāsa. For the present, however, no very definite date can be assigned to him.²

Like so many later dramatists, Bhāsa borrows his plots from the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and popular legends. Kings, ministers and ambassadors jostle one another on his stage but his plays are not political. Not even the Abhiṣekanāṭaka fulfils the expectations raised by its title and its plot which begins with the conflict of Rāma's ally, the monkey Sugriva, with his brother Bālin and ends with the fall of the demon Rāvaṇa. Another piece, Cārudatta, which might have supplied the plot to Śūdraka's Mṛicchakāṭikā, is no better from the political point of view, though it throws interesting side-lights on

¹ Bāṇa, Hargacarita, verses 15-16.

² For the date and authorship of the plays attributed to Bhāsa, T. Gaṇapati Śāstrī, Introduction to Svapnavāsavadattā and Pratimānāṭakam; Bulletin of Oriental Studies, London Institution, III, p. 627; Bhāsa's Dramas, a criticism. For contrary views, L. D. Barnett, Bulletin of Oriental Studies, London Institution, III, pp. 107, 519. Jayaswal (J.A.S.B., New Series, 1913, pp. 259-70) places Bhāsa about the third century A.D. Keith (Sanskrit Drama, pp. 91-126; Bulletin of Oriental Studies, London Institution, III, p. 295) places him about 800 A.D. On the whole question see also Macdonell, J.R.A.S., 1913, pp. 186-90; F. W. Thomas, J.R.A.S., 1924, pp. 78-83; Ibid., 1925, pp. 100-104; C. R. Devadhar, Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute, 1925-26, pp. 29-64; A. P. Banerji Sastrī, J.B.O.R.S., 1928 (Vol. IX, Part I), pp. 49-113; V. S. Sukthankar, J.B.B.R.A.S., 1917-18, Vol. XXV, No. 1, pp. 230 et seq.; J.A.O.S., 1920, pp. 248 et seq.; Ibid., 1921, pp. 107 et seq.; K. R. Pisharoti, Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. I, 1925, pp. 103 et seq.; Bhaṭṭanātha Svāmin, Ind. Ant., 1916, pp. 189-95; J. Ghatak, Journal of the Department of Letters, Vol. XII, 1925, pp. 1-46; Pisharoti, Journal of the Mythic Society, XI, pp. 353 et seq.; XII, pp. 53 et seq.

the manners of those days. In *Avimāraka*, Kauṇjāyana, one of the two ministers of king Kuntibhoja, laments the sad plight of those fools whom vanity prompts to accept the office of ministers. If their projects are successful, the glory falls to the strength of the sovereign. But if they fail, they are denounced for incompetence.¹ Shortly after, the minister wants the king to honour the envoy of the Benâres sovereign. The king exclaims that the ministerial mind looks only to business, not to affection. When called in, he feels how heavy is the burden of the crown. Dharma or the law must be considered at first. The working of the minister's mind must be followed intelligently. The king must conceal his passions—desires and anger. A policy of mercy or sternness must be (determined and) followed as the juncture of events requires. Through spies—eyes of the king—the doings of the people must be perceived; so, too, the maṇḍala of neighbouring kings must be watched. The king must carefully guard his own person and yet expose it on the field of battle.² In the second Act, the hero Avimāraka incidentally remarks that according to the injunction of Śāstras one should hold consultation with two (councillors).³ In a single-act play, *Dātavākya*, where the plot consists of Kṛiṣṇa's futile mission to Duryodhana on the eve of the Great Civil War, sovereignty appears in all its pride. Duryodhana scoffs at the idea of reconciliation. Princes enjoy dominion after defeating their enemies. Dominion is not to be begged in this world. Nor is it to be bestowed on the helpless.⁴ The *Pratijñāyugandharāyaṇam* enshrines a beautiful picture of ministerial loyalty. It also furnishes an interesting example of aristocratic pride

¹ *Avimāraka* (ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī), p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 81, stanza ii on the same page for another political touch.

⁴ *Dātavākya* (ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī), p. 88.

(pp. 30-31). Apart from these and similar unimportant political touches, it is clear that Bhāsa upholds the Brahmanic order of things and recognises the supremacy of Brāhmaṇas. In another single-act play, called *Madhyamavyāyoga*, based on a *Mahābhārata* incident, Bhīmasena, proud of his Kṣatriya origin, feels that a Brāhmaṇa deserves the highest worship and is ready to sacrifice himself for his safety.¹ *Vāsavadattā*, Act VI, shows that the door-keeper and chamberlain were two distinct officers. There were a number of guards and police officers to maintain order. In Act I, they are seen turning away the people. *Vāsavadattā* also shows that the capital of a small kingdom could sometimes be no bigger than a village, but ambitions for wide conquest might still be there. The fourth Act brings a *Viddāśaka*—jester—as the companion and confidential friend of the king.

Here, too, may be noticed another work which is not the product of a single mind or age but which perhaps assumed its present shape sometime after the fall of the Gupta empire. The *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*,² says Charpentier, “is a collection of materials differing in age and derived from different sources.” “It seems at least probable that the main texts already existed in their present shape before the final redaction of the canon at the Council of Valabhī (probably in 526 A.D.).”³ The text touches government in a rather left-handed manner. But the dialogue between Indra, the king of gods disguised as a Brāhmaṇa, and Nami who had just received enlightenment and renounced his family and dominion of Mithilā contains a few interesting political references. The federal-feudal idea is there. “Bring into subjection all princes who do not acknowledge you,” says

¹ *Madhyamavyāyoga* (ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī), p. 17.

² Ed. Jarl Charpentier, *Archives D'Études Orientales*, No. 21.

³ *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp. 40-41, 48.

Indra to Nami. Kings lived in great pomp and glory and constantly multiplied their treasure, jewellery, wardrobe and conveyances. Towns were often enclosed by walls, defended by battlemented gates, moats and those instruments of warfare which were called Śataghñis. It was felt that the government must severely punish robbers, cut-purses and burglars and thus establish internal tranquillity.¹

¹ Ibid., Adhyayana, IX, 22—39. For some interesting remarks on Brāhmaṇas, XXV, 24, 33.

CHAPTER XII.

The Later Dharma Śāstras, Purāṇas and other Literature.

The interval between the destruction of the Gupta empire towards the close of the 5th century A.D. and the rise of the Vardhana empire at the dawn of the 7th century A.D. is again an interregnum of confusion and obscurity. The coins and inscriptions supply some names of kings, some outline of certain events such as the invasion, devastation, and the repulse of Huns but they throw little light on institutions. The literature of the period, however, frequently touches on politics. It is not free from difficulties. The dates of the various works are doubtful. The whole literature is bound to the tradition of the past and attempts consciously to move in the old groves. On the other hand, it has suffered from later interpolations. Its data can be held true only in a very general manner and for a rather long period extending beyond the interregnum into subsequent centuries. Once again, its details, precisely worked out and all very fascinating, must be neglected as predominantly theoretical. From the political point of view the extant literature may be viewed under the categories of Dharma Śāstras, Purāṇas and classical literature.

Of the later Dharma Śāstras,¹ Nārada and Bṛihaspati are the most important. The former who flourished about the 6th century A.D. draws plentifully on Manu and other Dharma Śāstras and, on the whole, lacks originality. He is concerned

¹ On Dharma Śāstras in general, *supra*, Ch. X.

primarily with law and touches but incidentally on administrative matters. It is remarkable that the high-sounding imperial or feudatory titles which came into vogue during the Gupta period and lasted for several centuries are not mentioned in Nārada or any other Dharma Śāstra. These adhere to the time-honoured expressions, Rāja, Nripati, etc., and show that the pompous style had not originated when the Dharma Śāstra tradition was first chalked out. Nārada places the king and the Brāhmaṇa among the eight sacred objects. He would, like Gautama, exempt them from censure and corporal punishment in this world, "for these two sustain the visible world." The law which Nārada states pertains to the whole of human life. For example, if a man deserts a wife who is obedient and virtuous and who is the mother of male issue, he should be severely punished and brought to his duty by the king. He follows Manu, with his caste discriminations, in his rules on oaths and admission of evidence. He reduces ordeals to a precise system—a subject which is dealt with yet more thoroughly by Brihaspati. In the administration of justice, the assessors are given a more important position than in Manu. Nārada is fuller on procedure than his predecessors,¹ but he mostly agrees with Brihaspati.

Brihaspati who cannot be placed later than the sixth or seventh century A.D. may be taken as the typical Brahmanical exponent of law and procedure during this period. In the hall of justice

Brihaspati. in the fort, facing the east, the court should be held all through the morning hours till noon, every day except the holidays. Brihaspati divides courts into four classes: (1) stationary, (2) those moving about, (3) those presided over by the chief judge, and (4) those directed by the king.²

¹ Nārada, XII, 95; XVI, 20; XVIII, 12, 54, etc.

² Brihaspati, I, 2-3. See also I, 1, for Brihaspati's idea of the need of judicial administration.

As in Manu, the king should be assisted by three assessors.¹ But the popular element enters into the administration of justice in a much more pronounced manner than in Manu. Cultivators, artisans, trade-guilds, artists, money-lenders, dancers, religious mendicants and even robbers are told to administer their disputes according to rules of their own professions. Families, craft-guilds and local assemblies may be authorised by the king to dispose of law-suits among their members except such as concern violent crimes. Brihaspati also provides for appeal from meetings of kindred to companies, thence to assemblies and finally to the royal judges on the ground that the lower courts have not duly investigated or deliberated on the cause. The law which the royal courts are told to administer takes account of sacred injunctions, custom and equity. Thus, the king in the court is exhorted to listen to the Purāṇas, codes of law, and rules of polity, to act on the principles of equity, and abide by the opinion of the judges and the doctrine of the sacred law. It was a political necessity to preserve intact the time-honoured institutions of every country, caste and family. "Otherwise the people would rise in rebellion, the subjects would become disaffected towards their rulers; and the army and treasure would be destroyed." Among those who are not to be consulted in adjudication are people ignorant of local customs. A little later, Brihaspati expressly lays down that no sentence should be passed merely according to the letter of the law, but the circumstances of a case must be closely examined. Local custom, however, can be overruled by royal edicts, which thus constitute a distinct source of law. As in Manu, the law on defamation and adultery is vitiated by considerations of caste. Brihaspati counsels itinerant courts. "For persons roaming the forest, a court should be held in the forest; for warriors,

¹ Ibid., I, 20.

in the camp; and for merchants, in the caravan."¹ It is needless to follow Brihaspati into rules of procedure, etc., for they correspond to those enunciated by Manu. But it may be pointed out that, according to him, law-suits fall into two categories, those originating from disputes regarding wealth and those relating to injuries. Roughly, the distinction corresponds to civil and criminal suits.² In the absence of the king, some Brâhmaṇa versed in law is to act as judge.³

Like Manu and Nârada, Brihaspati stresses the need of evidence, classifies witnesses and hurls anathemas against perjury, but he thinks that various motives, affection, anger or avarice, may render the

testimony of witnesses nugatory. When doubts arise with regard to documentary and oral evidence, and when reasoning itself fails, particularly when the offence in question has been committed at night or in solitary places, ordeals should be employed. While Manu had been content with two, Brihaspati enumerated nine of them, to be administered according to the character of the accused and the nature of the charge. An ordeal must always be administered according to the established rule by persons versed in the regulations. "If it is administered against the rule, it is ineffective as a means of proving what ought to be proved." In the system of Brihaspati there was a general rule that if a certain amount of money or property in question justified an ordeal for a low-class man, double the amount justified it for a middle-class man and four times as much for a high-class man. In the ordeal by balance a person who, when weighed a second time, retained his original weight, was declared innocent while he who weighed heavier was adjudged guilty. It was held that the weight of sin made

¹ Ibid., I, 26—31, 23—25, 33; II, 28, 12, 24, 26-27; XX, 5—15; XXIV, 12. Parâśaramâdhava, pp. 17-18.

² Ibid., II, 5.

³ Ibid., II, 32.

the difference. "Should the scale break, or the balance or beam, or iron hooks split, or the strings burst, or the transverse beam split, he would have to be declared guilty." In the ordeal by water, an individual was immersed in water and three arrows were discharged. In the ordeal by poison, one had to digest poison "given to him according to rule, without the application of spells or antidotes." One should drink three handfuls of water in which the weapon of one's special deity had been bathed. If in a week or fortnight, no calamity happened to him, to his son, wife, or property, he was declared innocent. Or, after a fast and purification, one should chew grains of rice when the sun is not visible. If what he spits out is pure, he is innocent; if it is mixed with blood, he is guilty. If one can take out a hot piece of gold out of heated oil and butter, without one's fingers trembling or being blistered, one is declared innocent. To prove his innocence, one accused of theft should lick with his tongue without injury an iron ploughshare twelve palas in weight. The lighter ordeals are reserved for Brâhmanas and women. The Hindu law-givers tend to regard the oath as a kind of ordeal on the ground that it invokes supernatural agency.¹ The law of procedure in Brihaspati bears a family resemblance to the provisions in the Dharmasthiya book of the Kauṭīliya Arthasâstra.

A word may be said of the other Smṛitis which assumed their present shape perhaps a little later but which faithfully continue the old tradition.

Other Smṛitis. Their number is legion. Yājñavalkya had mentioned a number of Dharma Śâstras including those of Atri, Harita, Uśanas, Aṅgiras, Yama, Samavrata, Kâtyâyana,

¹ Ibid., X, 1—33. For actual practice, cf. Yuan Chwang (Watters, I, 172) who, writing in the seventh century, speaks of four ordeals—water, fire, weighing and poison. His description of them is different from that of the Smṛitis. See *infra*, Ch. XIII.

Parāśara, Vyāsa, Śaṅkha, Likhita, Dakṣa, Śātātapa. Vriddha Gautama counted 56 or 57 teachers of the law and Nanda Paṇḍita, author of the *Vaijayanti*, 57. Mitramiśra in his *Viramitrodaya* speaks of 18 primary, 18 secondary and 21 other *Smṛitis*.¹ Other lists, which are sometimes shorter, do not always agree. Thus Parāśara substitutes Kāśyapa, Gārgya and Pracetā for Yama, Bṛhaspati and Vyāsa. The *Padma Purāṇa* omits Atri and adds others to make up its list of thirty-six. Of all these, one

of the most important, though rather late, Parāśara, is that of Parāśara.² He recognises no finality in law. It changes from time to time. Every age has its own scheme of duties which the government should enforce. In his own scheme of the social order he seeks elaborately to define the occupations which different classes of people may follow under different circumstances. Government should be conducted according to law. In laying down the law, the king must pay heed to Brāhmaṇas. A king should protect the earth, maintain order with a stern hand and conquer the forces of his enemies. Taxes should be mild.³

Atri, describing the duties of various castes, wants a king to punish those who forsake their Dharma.⁴ The

Atri, etc. king should constantly examine the virtue and sin in the various castes.⁵

Those (Brāhmaṇas) who do not perform sacrifices are

¹ Forty-six of these appear in the list of Stenzler and forty-seven in that of Roer. The Ānanda Āśrama of Poona has published a collection of twenty-seven *Smṛitis* including the *Devala* which was composed in Sindh about the time of the Arab invasion in the 8th century A.D.

² There is a still later work called *Parāśartya Dharma Śāstra*, highly tinged with sectarianism. It is politically valueless. Parāśara deals mainly with Ācāra and Prāyaścitta.

³ Parāśara *Smṛiti* (ed. Vināyak Dharmādhikārīn with the *Vidyanmandhara* commentary, Benares, 1913), I, 33, 61-67; II, 2, 12-14; VIII, 28-29; X, 5-41; XI, 50.

⁴ Atri, I, 12-15, 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 27.

declared thieves and those who bestow alms on them should be punished by the king.¹ Harita declares as usual that a Kṣatriya should protect his subjects righteously, should duly celebrate sacrifices, and should be devoted to study.² Likhita promises high spiritual rewards to those who excavate tanks, plant trees and perform other such works of public beneficence.³ Vyāsa proclaims the supremacy of Brāhmaṇas in transcendent terms and recommends lavish gifts to them.⁴ Śaṅkha is content with the usual remarks on castes and orders.⁵ Uśanas, Aṅgiras, Yama, Samavratā, Dakṣa, and Śātātapa devote themselves mainly to Śrāddha and other ceremonies. Nor have the rest of the Smṛitis any political significance. The Dharma Śāstra doctrine exercised a good deal of influence on royal policy. Apart from *a priori* reasons, the inscriptions amply testify to the fact. Not to speak of Vyāsa's imprecatory verses which occur in numberless grants, the inscriptions sometimes expressly refer to Dharma Śāstras.⁶

The composition of the Purāṇas extends even over a longer period than that of the Smṛitis. From very ancient times there existed accounts of cosmic creation and regal dynasties or heroes in a more or less popular form. The Atharvaveda speaks of Itihāsa-Purāṇa which was, later, loosely called a fifth Veda. The Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra places the Itihāsa-

¹ Ibid., I, 22-23.

² Harita, II, 2-5, see also II, 6-10.

³ Likhita, 1-4.

⁴ Vyāsa, IV, 10, 16, 31.

⁵ Śaṅkha, I, 2.

⁶ For Gupta times, see Fleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 147, 168, 182; for the sixth century A.D. Ep. Ind., III, 80-81, 322; Ind. Ant., IX, p. 48; VIII, p. 97, 303; XVII, p. 198; for the ninth century, Ep. Ind., IV, p. 346; VI, 20; for the south from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, Epigraphia Carnatica, IV, p. 62; V, 22, 151; VII, 50, 59, 85; IX, 85; XI, 13, 41, 45, etc., etc.

Purāṇa on the prince's curricula of study. Purāṇas are frequently mentioned in literature and in the Smṛitis. It was, however, roughly between the fifth and tenth centuries A.D. that after constant editing, re-editing, additions and subtractions, the Puranic tradition assumed something like its present shape in eighteen books, divided into three schools after Brahman, Śiva and Viṣṇu. Interpolations, however, continued to be made for long afterwards and influences as late as the 16th century A.D. are clearly visible. According to tradition, the Purāṇas comprised altogether 4,00,000 couplets ranging from the 81,000 of the Skanda to 9,000 of the Mārkaṇḍeya but the actual number in each Purāṇa does not always agree with the orthodox computation.¹

Brahmanical writers will have it that every Purāṇa must deal with primary creation or cosmogony, secondary creation or cosmogony of worlds including chronology, genealogy of gods and patriarchs, reigns of Manus and the history of the solar and lunar dynasties. An ampler analysis splits up these subjects into ten categories but it is applicable really to Upa-Purāṇas, the eighteen sub-Purāṇas, which were composed on the model

¹ For the size, etc., the Matsya Purāṇa, LIII, 13-58.

The Matsya Purāṇa preserves the tradition that the Purāṇas were composed after the Mahābhārata by Vyāsa. The Kārma Purāṇa gives a list of nineteen Purāṇas. See also Wilson, Introduction to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. For an 11th century view of Purāṇas, Alberuni, tr. Sachau, Vol. I, 130-31. Recently there has set in a reaction against the nineteenth century underrating of Purāṇas. For instance, Rapson thinks that they have preserved, though in a perverted form, an independent tradition which supplements the priestly tradition of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas, and which goes back to the same period (Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 302). The Puranic data have been worked out by Pargiter, Dynasties of the Kali Age; Ancient Indian Historical Tradition: various articles in J. R. A. S. The Sthala-Purāṇas or Mahātmyas are legion but they contain hardly any administrative data.

of Purāṇas. The Kūrma Purāṇa and the Śrīmad Bhāgavata give slightly different lists of contents. The political matter introduced into the various sections of the Purāṇas is true only in a general way for a few centuries and unfortunately, directly adds very little to our knowledge of the working of institutions. Some inferences can be drawn from them but it has to be borne in mind that the Purāṇas draw profusely on the epics, including the Hari-vamśa of the Mahābhārata, on the Smritis, Nīti literature and, in some cases, on one another. The Purāṇas give many lists of universal sovereigns, some of whom like Manu, Sagara, Yayāti, Prithu, Dilipa are mythical, while others may be historical, perhaps only suzerains on a small scale.¹

Politically, the Agni Purāṇa is one of the most remarkable. But in the relevant passages it is largely indebted

to the Mahābhārata, to the Smritis and
The Agni Purāṇa. to Kāmandaka, the author of the Nītisāra.

It thinks of the state as a culture-state, a moral association, with the king, that is, the government, as the supreme instrument for promoting welfare. It describes the qualities and duties of the king in the usual idealistic style. His life is to be one perpetual vow of ameliorating the condition of his subjects. In himself he must be an example of moral discipline, character, energy and fortitude. In particular, he should take care to protect his subjects against the extortions and oppressions of his own officers and favourites and of the usurers.²

¹ Kūrma Purāṇa, XX, 31; Padma, IV, 110-18; Brahmanḍa, LXIX, 1-3; Mārkaṇḍeya, OXI, 13, etc., etc.

² Agni Purāṇa (ed. Manmath Nath Dutt). Uttarakhaṇḍa, CCXVIII, 2-3; CCXX, 22-23; CCXXII, 15-18; CCXXIII, 4-13; 22-26; CCXXV, 1-17; CCXXIX, 6-12. For the king's divinity, CCXVI, 17-20. For the place of politics in the Scheme of Sciences, I, 14-17, also CCXXI.

The Agni, like other Purāṇas, gives elaborate descriptions of the sacrifices and ceremonies which should accompany the consecration of a king. It

The king. reproduces numbers of Vedic texts for citation and, on the whole, adheres to the old tradition. Only a few additional details are given. Broadly speaking, the ceremonies are divided into (1) those of Aindra Śānti, performed on the day preceding the consecration, and (2) those performed on the day of consecration. According to this Purāṇa, the consecration should be performed a year after the actual accession to power and the occasion should be signalled by a proclamation of protection to all. The king might celebrate his birthday every year in grand style. He might perform the Abhiṣeka for his successor. The king should every day see his subjects, consider the daily reports of income and expenditure and receive Brāhmaṇas, ministers, officers and others presented by the usher of the court. Every day he should consult his ministers on weighty matters and preside over the court of justice.¹

Princes should be instructed in the science of war and the arts of general utility as well as in the moral sciences.

Princes. They should be taught fine arts in the company of courtiers. If they were not amenable to education, the king should bind them down in a "prison of pleasure" to keep them from mischief. In any case, guards should be set to watch the actions and

Officials. movements of princes.² The Agni Purāṇa jumbles up state and household officials and particularly mentions the Minister, Treasurer, Ambassador, Keeper of the Royal Elephants, Keeper of Stables,

¹ CCXVIII, 4-84; CCXIX; CCXXV. For mantras to be used on the consecration of a king, CCXIX; for the merit of building golden temples, XXXVIII; for the consecration of tanks and ponds, LXIV.

² Ibid., CCXXV.

Masters of the Castles and Fortresses, Royal Physicians, Writers. A Brâhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya should be appointed Commander-in-chief, while men of noble descent should occupy the positions of chamberlains and door-keepers. There should be a master of the kitchen who should live in the house where food is cooked for the king. Over and above his efficiency in cuisine and experience of affairs of the world, his supreme qualification is fond attachment to the king. The bearer of the royal betel-vessel may be either a man or a woman who should feel a real attachment to the king. Behind this insistence on affection lies the apprehension of poison being administered to the king. The seraglio employs many women and eunuchs in the offices of ushers and others. Many of the royal officials and servants seem to be hereditary. For the higher officers the Purâṇa prescribes the usual intellectual and moral qualifications. Only it bars atheists from all employment under the king. For local government the old Dharma Śâstra and Arthaśâstra schemes are adopted. The designations are interesting and probably correspond to facts in some locality. The head of the village is called Grâmâdhipati; the superintendent of ten villages is known as Daśagrâmâdhipati; of a hundred villages as Śatagrâmâdhipati and the yet higher officer as Viśveśvara. Their remunerations are to be fixed according to the importance of their charges. A village should be 100 dhanus in extent and a town 200 or 300 dhanus. A town should be enclosed by a wall which a camel could not look over.¹

The Agni Purâṇa mainly follows its predecessors in laying down the principles and prescribing the items of taxation—the land revenue, the customs, the toll on sales and purchases, the division of treasure-trove, unclaimed property, etc. One-

¹ Ibid., CXIX, 1-8; CCXVII, 20-22; CCXX; CCXXI; CCXXIII, 1-4.

fifth is to be charged on gold; one-sixth on animals, articles of perfumery, cereals, flowers, roots, fruits, leaves, pot-herbs, hays, bamboos, hides, wicker-works, earthen pots, stone-vessels, honey, meat and clarified butter. The sale of female slaves is recognised and a duty according to the time and country of their importation is prescribed. Brâhmanas are not to be taxed under any circumstances; they are always to be protected and cherished.¹

On civil and criminal law and on procedure, the Agni Purâṇa dilates at enormous length but there are only a

Justice.

few ideas which are peculiar to it, which are likely to have a practical bearing and

which alone need be noted. There are four sources of law—the Scriptures, custom, the practice of the righteous and royal commands. Treason on the part of feudatories or governors should be punished by amputation of the hands and by impalement.² Enemies of the public good should be executed publicly, while all other sentences should be carried out privately.³ In the royal court, assessors and ordeals are admitted. So we have the involved statement that a tribunal should consist of the eight limbs of a law-suit—the king, the judge, the jurors, the scriptures, the astrologer, the clerk, gold, fire, and water.⁴ Witnesses should belong to the same caste or social order as the party which cites them.⁵

The relations of the feudatories to the suzerain power in the Agni Purâṇa are specially noteworthy. In times

Feudatories.

of war they must be at the beck and call

of the sovereign. They should mark out the sovereign's friends from his foes. They should rally

¹ Ibid., CCXXIII, 23—29; COXXIII, 14—16; COXII, 15—18, 30—32.

² Ibid., COXXVII, 1—17, 40—48; CCLIII, 3, 50.

³ CCXLI, 47—53.

⁴ Ibid., CCLIII, 3—66.

⁵ Ibid., CCLV, 2. On civil and criminal law in general, CCLIV—CCLVIII.

supporters to the king's banner and collect troops for him. They must help him with all their resources. They should appease the public feeling for him.¹

On foreign affairs the Purāṇa merely embellishes the precepts of its predecessors. Only its remarks on ambassadors are striking. They are divided into three classes: (1) Śāsanārthaka, those charged simply to deliver a message, (2) Mitrārtha, those charged to conduct negotiations according to instructions from headquarters, and (3) Nihṣṛiṣṭārtha or plenipotentiaries, those who are authorised to settle affairs according to their own lights. All ambassadors, of whatever grade, must observe the proper etiquette.²

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa,³ one of the earliest, is free from sectarianism, but it wants the rules of the social order to be enforced with the utmost strictness.

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.

All must be kept within bounds, within their particular duties and occupations.

A royal heir-apparent who married a Vaiśyā forfeited his right to the throne and had to content himself with Vaiśya occupations.⁴ The Purāṇa emphasises the duty and wisdom of conciliating the subjects. But whosoever is an obstacle in the way of promoting popular welfare, be it

¹ Ibid., CCXLI, 16—28.

² Ibid., CXXXVI, 17—25; CCXXXVI, 4—8; CCXLI, 1—12. For descriptions of military tactics, strategy, manœuvres, auspicious auguries, omens, etc., CCXL, 7—32; CCXXXII—CCXXXIII, CCXXXVI. CCLII for thirty-two varieties of military art. For forts, CCXXII. For the seven factors of government, CCXXXIX.

³ Wilson assigned the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa to the 9th or 10th century A.D. Pargiter (Introduction to his translation, XIII—XIV) places it in the fourth century. Perhaps the 6th century is the most probable date.

⁴ Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, XXVIII, 33—36; CXIII, 19—21.

father or preceptor, kinsman or friend, should be killed by the king.¹

The Vāyu Purāṇa, one of the oldest like the Mārkaṇḍeya, traces the history of man from the golden age, through its gradual degeneration, to the terrible

The Vāyu Purāṇa. Kaliyuga. The social order, supposed to be based on hard psychological facts, utility and divine sanction, must be relentlessly enforced by the government.²

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa throws no additional light on institutions but it gives an interesting picture of a primeval

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa. golden age with its bliss and plenty, its gradual degeneration into what is called 'civilisation'—the origin of society, caste,

agriculture, industry, commerce, houses, villages and towns, etc., etc. It tends to bring out that the government exists to enforce the social order and to lead and educate the people into righteousness. It repeats the story of Vena from the Mahābhārata as a warning against tyrannical rule.³

The Matsya Purāṇa repeats the same early history of man in yet greater detail and enforces the same conclusion.⁴

The Matsya Purāṇa. It looks with horror on Śādra kingship and counts it as one of the curses of the degenerate Kali age.⁵ It will appear that

¹ Ibid., XXVII, 1; CXXXI, 27-28. For the king's divinity, dignity, qualifications and duties, for ministers, officers, spies, etc., all discussed in the usual refrain, XVII, 21; XXVII, 1-16; 21-31. For punishments in this and the future life, XV, 1-4, 6, 13-16, 19.

² Vāyu Purāṇa (ed. Rājendra Lal Mitra), Canto VIII, 60-61, 64-65, 78-80, 84-90, 92-97. For details of constructions advocated, 98-123; for agriculture, 142-43; for caste, 157-59; for the scheme of duties, 161-64.

³ Viṣṇu Purāṇa (ed. T. R. Vyāsachārya, Bombay, 1904), VI, 6, 17-20. Also Canto XIII.

⁴ Matsya Purāṇa, Canto XLVII. ⁵ Ibid., OXLIV, 30-47.

Śūdra kingship was a fact at the time. For the rest it repeats its predecessors and reproduces whole sections from Kāmandaka.¹

In the Varāha Purāṇa the notices of the creation of the world and the reigns of kings are rather brief and dispersed.

The Varāha Purāṇa. It mentions several kings who, tired of worldly prosperity, installed their sons on the throne and departed for the forest. It dogmatizes on Brahmanic supremacy as usual.²

The Kārma Purāṇa. The Kārma Purāṇa has a long version of the golden age and its gradual degeneration. It exhausts its vocabulary in its denunciation of the Kali age. Speaking in the future tense in the Puranic style, it laments that in that age Brāhmaṇas will associate with Śūdras, and join them in the performance of religious rites. "Princes surrounded by Śūdras, shall persecute the Brāhmaṇas." Śūdras will occupy higher positions than Brāhmaṇas. All alike will insult and disparage the Vedas and gods.³ These fulminations probably point to Buddhist or Jaina ascendancy in certain quarters. They leave no doubt that in certain ages and regions Brahmanic supremacy was undermined, that Śūdras attained to the highest positions and guided the policy of the state. The Svayambhū Purāṇa points to the same conclusion.⁴

On this matter Puranic evidence unexpectedly corrects the impression which the Dharma Śāstras and even classical literature tend to produce.

¹ Ibid., Cantos CCXXII-CCXVI, for state-craft in general. On finance, law and punishments, CCXXVII-CCXXVIII.

² Varāha Purāṇa (ed. H. P. Sastri), CCXXVIII, 18-20.

³ Kārma Purāṇa (ed. Nīlmani Mukhopādhyāya), Sec. I, Cantos XXIX-XXX.

⁴ Svayambhū Purāṇa, Canto VII.

The Padma Purāṇa. The Padma Purāṇa discusses Niti or policy, royal duties, diplomacy, manœuvres, etc., in the usual style.¹ It lacks originality. Nor is the Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa more enlightening, though, *inter alia*, it gives a version of the story of Rāma.

The Garuḍa Purāṇa. The Garuḍa Purāṇa has some interesting political passages but they yield no fresh information.² Some of the Purāṇas like the Liṅga and Brahma-vaivarta contain hardly anything political. The Brahma Purāṇa, quoted in Viramitrodaya, Rājantiprakāśa adds that the king after the ceremony of consecration went round the capital on an elephant, re-entered the palace, and offered honour to the elders of the city.³

The Upa-Purāṇas. As their title indicates, the Upa-purāṇas depend on the Purāṇas. Only two of them need be noticed in connection with political institutions. The Bṛhaddharma repeats the early history of man, and stresses caste. Relating the episode of Veṇa with abundant details, it sanctions regicide as the last resort against tyranny.⁴ On the other hand, it stands for a firm government. If the king has to slaughter in the course of protection, he incurs no sin. The world yields to the control only of those who wield the rod.⁵ But Brāhmaṇas, women, old men and children are exempt from capital punishment.⁶ No interest on loans

¹ Padma Purāṇa (ed. Mahādeva Chimanji Apte), Vol. III, Cantos CCXVI—CCXXIX.

² Garuḍa Purāṇa, CXI—CXIV, OXLIII, OXLIV. It looks on Nṛtiśāstra as a science of general morals (CVIII, I).

³ Rājantiprakāśa, p. 46.

⁴ Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa (ed. H. P. Śāstrī), XII, 5—42; I, 4—6, 14, 22—23; II, 8—62; XIII, 13—49, 54—60; XIV, 3—80.

⁵ Ibid., III, 10 et seq., III, 6—7, for the divine nature of the king.

⁶ Ibid., III, 23—33. For supernatural punishments, 34—37.

should be charged from Brâhmaṇas. Śûdras should be debarred from the study of sacred literature. The brothers of a king should not be given too great a latitude. No minister should continue too long in office. The revenue should be spent on projects of Dharma, on the royal household, and on the succour of Vipras. The government should keep itself in constant readiness for war and should maintain its forces in perfect order.¹

The Bṛihannâradiya Upa-Purâṇa, one of the latest and most orthodox, prescribes different dresses for different castes. It declares that Dharma varies according to æons and that in the Kali-yuga inter-caste marriage, sea-voyage, Vânaprastha, etc., are forbidden.²

Hindu tradition reckons the Śrîmad Bhâgavata among the Purâṇas, though it is really an independent work.³ It preaches the doctrine of Bhâgavata passive obedience,⁴ but qualifies it by approving of the fate which befell Veṇa.⁵ It is the king's duty to educate his subjects into virtue, to 'protect' all, to set every one to his duty, and to chastise the undutiful.⁶ In an interesting passage it derives the king's right to rule from his setting up idols of gods. The evidence of inscriptions shows that many kings founded or

¹ Ibid., III, 41—49, 51, 54; IV, 10, 18—24.

² Bṛihannâradiya Purâṇa (ed. Hṛiṣikeṣa Śâstrî), Canto XXII.

³ The Śrîmad Bhâgavata inculcates the worship of Kṛiṣṇa and is greatly indebted to the Harivamśa and the Viṣṇu Purâṇa. A late passage in the Padma Purâṇa says that Vyâsa, the traditional author of the Mahâbhârata and the Purâṇas, composed the Bhâgavata last of all, and put into it the essence of all. Of the numerous commentaries on this work, that by Śrîdhara Svâmin is the best.

⁴ Śrîmad Bhâgavata, IV, 13, 23.

⁵ Ibid., IV, 14, 30—35.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 20—22, 24.

endowed temples with unstinted profusion.¹ The enumeration of the emblems of sovereignty in the Bhāgavata is interesting. There is the Camara, Vyajana,—fans—Śaṅkha or conch-shell, chatra or umbrella, the crown, Simhāsana or throne, Śayana or couch.²

A few classical writers who belong to this period may be noticed. Bhāravi, who lived probably in the sixth century A.D., has a good deal of political wisdom but is not very enlightening on institutions. From the account of Duryodhana's rule given by Yudhiṣṭhira's agent in the first canto of the Kirātārjuniya, it will appear that kings would sometimes associate their brothers and other near relations in the task of administration. Spies and secret agents were employed in large numbers, and earnest efforts were made to win popular loyalty and attachment.³

Daṇḍin who flourished probably in the sixth or in the seventh century A.D. represents a decadent stage in literary style and in political wisdom.⁴

Daṇḍin. His Daśakumāracarita, however, is not without a few points of interest for the student of institutions. We hear of a king of Magadha who had three minis-

¹ For this and some other political touches, *Ibid.*, IV, 2-8, 7-8, 11-19, 21-26, 45; XI, 3, 14-15, 17, 19.

² *Ibid.*, X, 26, 61.

³ On the poem of Bhāravi, F. W. Thomas, *J.R.A.S.*, 1917, pp. 869 et seq. For political references, *Kirātārjuniya*, I, 5, 7, 9-10, 13-14, 16, 21, 29-46; II, 1-52. Also Canto III. Bhāravi is mentioned in the Aihole Inscription of 634 A.D. (*Ep. Ind.*, VI, No. 1).

⁴ On the date of Daṇḍin, Pāthak, *Ind. Ant.*, XLI, p. 235. Keith, *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, 70-73. The *Avantisundarī Kathā*, lately discovered, develops the same plot as the *Daśakumāracarita* and appears to be Daṇḍin's work. It has been edited along with its summary by an unknown hand, by Rāmakṛṣṇa Kavi, in the *Dakṣiṇa-bhāratī Series*, No. 3, 1924.

ters. The office of minister was sometimes hereditary and was recognised as such. At its worst, a royal court could be the hot-bed of intrigue, jealousy, favouritism. Poison and the dagger would be freely resorted to and the life, safety, and reputation of all would be endangered.

Bhartṛihari who, according to the Chinese I-tsing, died about 650 A.D., has just a few political maxims in his *Nītiśataka* but throws no light on institutions. Yet there may be something in the tradition that he alternated between asceticism and worldly life.¹

Another contemporary poet, Subandhu, author of *Vāśavadattā*,² paints king *Cintāmaṇi* as an embodiment of moral discipline, beneficent 'protection,' martial glory, and as a patron of poetry and learning.³ Like so many other heroes of classical Sanskrit literature, *Cintāmaṇi* is a universal ruler who has humbled all the princes of the earth. It was only he and the elephant of the north that could be called rulers of the world.⁴ Behind this imagery there seems to be a feudalistic organisation. Among the king's servants there are bearers of betel which by this time seems to have become a necessary article of luxury for the upper classes.⁵

¹ Bhartṛihari, *Nītiśataka*, 46-47.

² Bāṇa, in the Preface to his *Harṣacarita*, refers to Subandhu's work. Gray (Introduction to his translation) places him in the sixth or seventh century A.D. See also Keith, *J. R. A. S.*, 1914, pp. 1102 et seq., and *Classical Sanskrit Literature*, p. 77. K. B. Pathak, *Ind. Ant.*, XL, p. 170, holds that Subandhu was a contemporary of the Guptas—Kumāragupta, Skandagupta and Bālāditya. D. R. Bhandarkar (*Ind. Ant.*, XLI, pp. 1-2) holds Vasubandhu to be the correct reading of the author's name. *Vāśavadattā* is an *ākhyāyikā* which, as defined in the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, should have verse in some places and prose in others. It has come down in two recensions, the Northern and the Southern. Sivarāma Tripāṭhi's *Kaśīcanadarpaṇa* commentary on *Vāśavadattā* belongs to the eighteenth century (Louis H. Gray, *J. A. O. S.*, XXIII, p. 57).

³ *Vāśavadattā*, tr. Gray, pp. 47 et seq.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

From the 4th century A.D., commences a long line of story-books, presumably under the impulse given by the Buddhist Jātakas and Avadānas. But the theory that the Indian tales were first composed in some form of Prākṛit and later turned into Sanskrit has now been shown to be entirely untenable. The main purpose of the stories is to impart ethical instruction through the words and actions of human beings, animals and birds. The Tantrākhyāyika, preserved in Kashmīr and perhaps composed there, is, in any case, earlier than the sixth century A.D. and may be older. It was turned into a yet more popular version in the Pañcatantra, attributed to Viṣṇuśarman. It was probably an earlier version of the present Pañcatantra which was translated into Pahlavi about the middle of the 6th century A.D. and thence into old Syriac in 570 and into Arabic in 750, the last rendering in its turn being translated into Old Spanish in 1251, which, finally was the source of Latin and, later, other European versions. In India the Pañcatantra has influenced all subsequent literature of the didactic tale.¹ We learn from the prologue in which king Amṛitaśakti of Mahilāropya arranges the education of his three sons, that princes were generally made over to Brāhmaṇa Paṇḍitas who taught them grammar, literature, Niti and other subjects. From the tales one can gather a good deal of the current political wisdom. Some kings nursed their kingdoms, others were too exacting in their demands on the subjects. Experience showed that the prosperity of monarchs was bound up with that of the people. Incidentally, we have an interesting remark that a fort was more useful than a thousand elephants and a

¹ On the Pañcatantra, Brown, J. A. O. S., Vol. 39, pp. 1 et seq.

See also Max Müller's *Essay on the Migration of Fables*. Benfrey's work on the Pañcatantra inaugurated what may be called the science of folklore—its motifs and migrations.

hundred thousand horses. No other passages need be quoted. In spite of their intrinsic charm, as political maxims, they are not valuable for the study of practical institutions.¹

Perhaps to the seventh century A.D. belongs the *Probodha Candrodaya*.² Though a spiritual drama,

it contains an interesting account of the preparations for the king's procession.

Prabodha Candrodaya. "Sprinkle the pavement of precious stones," so goes the command, "with water impregnated with sandalwood; open the fountains that their streams may play around; hang up festoons of large brilliant diamonds, and let the flag which bears the bow of Indra wave on the top of the royal residence."

¹ See for instance, Book I, Tale VII, pp. 41, 48.

² For the date, J. Taylor, Introduction to the translation, second edition, Bombay, p. 4.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Seventh Century A.D.

The material for reconstructing the administrative outline of the first half of the 7th century A.D. is unexpectedly copious. Besides some coins and

Material for inscriptions there is Bāṇa's historical study.

work, *Harṣacarita*, life of Harṣa, the paramount sovereign of the greater part of North India. *Harṣacarita* can, for political purposes, be usefully supplemented by Bāṇa's romance *Kādambarī*. Additional light is forthcoming from that prince of travellers and scholars, Yuan Chwang,¹ who spent fifteen years in the country and recorded his experiences in an admirable work. Fortunately, the authenticity and chronology of these sources are beyond doubt. They can all be used together.

These records centre round Harṣavardhana who, in consequence, has been endowed by modern writers with

a heroism, power and greatness beyond Harṣavardhana.

what a closer study of the originals warrants.² The earliest known ancestors of Harṣa were Naravardhana, Rājyavardhana, and Ādityavardhana who are called Mahārājas and may, therefore, like the

¹ For varieties of the spelling and pronunciation of the Chinese pilgrim's name, Rhys Davids in Watters, I, p. XI.

² The chief modern accounts of Harṣa are Ettinghausen's *Harṣavardhana, Empereur et Poète* (Paris, 1906), K. M. Pannikar's *Sri Harṣa of Kanauj* (Bombay, 1922), R. K. Mukerji's *Harṣa* (Milford, 1926), R. O. Majumdar, *J. B. O. R. S.*, 1923, Vol. IX, pp. 311-25, V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, 4th edition, pp. 348-72.

ancestors of the imperial Guptas, be presumed to have been feudatories. The dynasty started on an independent career with Prabhākaravardhana, who was the first to assume the title of Mahārājādhirāja.¹ Beginning life as the chief of Sthāpavisvara in the land of Śrīkaṇṭha, he brought a number of surrounding chiefs under his control and stood forth as a suzerain.² His death seemed at first sight to be the signal for the break-up of his empire but his son and successor Rājyavardhana stemmed the tide of revolt. On the new king's early tragic death, his brother Harṣavardhana more than held his own against the enemies of the dynasty, united his dominions with those of his widowed sister Rājyaśrī, the heir to her childless husband's patrimony of Kanauj, and after six years of campaigning brought many princes under his supremacy. He stood forth as the suzerain of the greater part of North India and one of the most powerful monarchs in the whole country. He died in 648 A.D.³

It is, however, a mistake to represent Harṣa as the king of the whole of North India or as the ruler of a unitary state. A close scrutiny of the documents shows him to have been only the suzerain of a very large number of chiefs and his relations with some of the rulers appear to be rather ill-defined. The constitution of Harṣa's empire

¹ Sonpat Copper Seal Inscription of Harṣavardhana, Fleet, op. cit., No. 52; Madhuban Plates, Ep. Ind., VII, No. 22.

² Harṣacarita (tr. Cowell and Thomas), p. 133. Prabhākaravardhana defeated a confederacy of princes under Devagupta which resisted him. Ep. Ind., VII, 185.

³ According to Yuan Chwang's Life, p. 156, Harṣa died in A.D. 655. Takakusu (I-tsing, pp. LVI and 163) accepts the date but Watters, I, 347, clearly implies that the Emperor was dead in 648 A.D. According to V. A. Smith (Early History of India, 4th edition, pp. 348 et seq.), Harṣa's reign lasted from 606 A.D. to 647 A.D.

follows the lines which the study of the political conditions of the preceding ages would lead one to expect.

Yuan Chwang, whose knowledge of the country was close and thorough, says that Yin-tu, as the Chinese

Fundamental political conditions. called India, was divided into more than seventy kingdoms.¹ Such is likely to have been the number of

states which were worth counting. But not all of them were perfectly independent. And besides them there seems to have been a yet larger number of feudatory domains. Putting the evidence of Yuan Chwang, Bâṇa-bhaṭṭa and the Inscriptions together, it appears that there were several circles of suzerainty, each comprising a suzerain and some feudatories, that within each circle there may be smaller circles of sub-infeudation, that Harṣa and Pulakeśin, who represented the two biggest and most important circles, claimed some sort of hegemony over less powerful suzerains and sometimes imposed their will on them. Thus, Kapis, probably modern Kāfiristān, was an independent state with ten dependencies. Its king celebrated the Mokṣapariṣad, the quinquennial Buddhist assembly, in the style of Harṣa.² Kashmir was also independent and had a number of dependencies such as Rājapur, Taxila and Simhapur. Yet Harṣa once compelled the king of Kashmir to part with a Buddha relic.³ Another independent state was Cheka with its capital at Sākala and with its circle of dependencies which included Multān. The praśasti of the temple of Lakkhâ Maṇḍal at Maḍhâ in Jaunsâr (Bâwar) shows the royal race of Simhapur reigning in the modern district of Jalandhar. It is probably identical with the Sang-ho-pu-lo of the Chinese.⁴ The dynasty

¹ Watters, I, pp. 140-41.

² Ibid., I, 123.

³ Yuan Chwang, Life, p. 181.

⁴ Beal, Si-yu-ki, I, 143-47.

is said to have conquered many rulers (Kṣitipāḥ dāpitāḥ) and appears to have been practically independent. Yet in some measure it recognised the suzerainty of Harṣa. Here the line between autonomy and complete independence was faintly drawn.¹ Matipura near Hardwār was ruled by a Śūdra king and does not seem to have formed part of Harṣa's empire. Thus, practically the whole of the north-west lay outside the limits of the Vardhana regime. Yet Harṣa could arrange that Yuan Chwang should be escorted by a military guard to the frontier, and that the north-western princes should see him safe to the borders of China.² Sindh was ruled by a Śūdra king. We know little about its political conditions in the age of Harṣavardhana but the Arab accounts prove that at the dawn of the eighth century A.D., it was dominated by federal-feudalism which is likely to have existed in the seventh century as well. It is remarkable that the tribal oligarchies which the Allāhābād Inscription of Samudragupta notices are no longer met with in the seventh century. It seems they had been swept off in the turmoils which followed the decline of the Gupta empire. It may be mentioned that Pāryātra (Bairāt) had a Vaiśya king.³ Towards the east, epigraphic evidence shows Śaśāṅka as a Mahārājādhirāja in Bengal in 619-20 A.D. He had under him some feudatories, one of whom an hereditary Mahārāja Mahāsāmanta issues a grant and acknowledges Śaśāṅka's suzerainty.⁴ Yet this Mahārājadhīrāja had been defeated by Harṣavardhana twelve years before. In Yuan Chwang's account of Bengal he appears no longer on the throne. It is probable that

¹ Ep. Ind., I, No. 2.

² Yuan Chwang, *Life*, p. 190. Watters, I, 297.

³ Harṣa's dominion did not extend over Nepāl which, as Sylvain Lévi has shown, was a Tibetan dependency.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VI, 143.

Harṣa, though victorious, failed at first to impose his suzerainty definitely on Śaśāṅka but that, later, he reduced him or his descendants completely to vassalage or exterminated the dynasty. Perhaps it had been assailed both from the west and the east. Bāṇa has it that the king of Kāmarūpa in Āssām voluntarily offered his allegiance to Harṣa and sent a priceless white umbrella to him. Probably, he wanted to safeguard his position against the common enemy, Śaśāṅka of Bengal. Kumāra retained his practical independence, but he suffered himself to be anointed by his new liege-lord. He attended Harṣa's court and Mokṣapariṣad and took precedence of all feudatories. He was expected to obey Harṣa. When the latter asked him to send the Chinese master, Yuan Chwang, to him, he had the hardihood to reply, "I would rather send my head than let your majesty have the master of the law." But when Harṣa proposed to take him at his word, Kumāra volunteered to bring Yuan himself to Harṣa.¹ Such was one of the forms of the tenure of vassalage which is removed only a step from independence. From the fact that Kumāra's position is definitely regarded as higher than that of other feudatories, it appears that the powers of the latter were more circumscribed. Towards Central India, Mālwa appears from Harṣacarita to have acknowledged the overlordship of the Vardhanas. But in the account of Yuan Chwang it is not only independent but counts the rulers of Vadnagar and K'ie-ch'a or K'i-T'a probably Cutch, as its vassals.² It is probable that Mālwa was really the centre of a political circle and was practically

¹ Yuan Chwang, *Life*, p. 186, Watters, I, pp. 349-50, Bāṇa, *Harṣacarita*, p. 139. For Kumāra, also Watters, II, p. 186, *Harṣacarita*, p. 294. For a Seal of Kumāra found at Nālanda, J. B. O. R. S., VI, Part I, pp. 151 et seq.

² Beal, II, 266, 268, Watters, II, 245, 247.

independent but it acknowledged Vardhana hegemony in a rough and ready manner. The position of Valabhi is difficult to unravel. Its ruler is said to have been the son-in-law of Harṣa though there is nowhere any mention of Harṣa having married. He was certainly defeated by Harṣa; he attends the latter's Mokṣapariṣad. But in the account of Yuan Chwang he is practically independent. His position seems to resemble that of the rulers of Kāmarūpa and Mālwa.¹ The grant of Dhruvasena III from Valabhi of the year 633-34 A.D. speaks of him as having wooed the assembly of kings (Kṣitipasaṁhati), that is, having established his suzerainty over a number of rulers.² A proclamation which, as Bāṇa says, Harṣa caused to be engraved soon after his accession, is interesting for the whole subject. It seems to refer both to feudatories and independent princes. "Let all 'kings' prepare their hands to give tribute, or grasp swords; to sieze the realms of space or chowries; let them bend their heads or their bows, grace their ears with my commands or their bowstrings; crown their heads with the dust of my feet or with helmets."³ Such was the formula of the Digvijaya or conquest of all the quarters, which was a time-honoured institution. Harṣa performed his Digvijaya with 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry. There is no mention of any Aśvamedha sacrifice anywhere. The Digvijaya might well have resulted in some annexations but it left numerous rulers semi-independent within the region which generally acknowledged the suzerainty of Harṣa. Their existence, indeed, is regarded as part of the order of the day. The size of their domains and their prestige varied enormously. Numbers of them appear on many occasions in Harṣacarita. In their very childhood the Princes Rājyavardhana and Harṣavardhana are given

¹ Yuan Chwang, *Life*, p. 185. Also *Ind. Ant.*, XIII, pp. 70 ff.

² *Ep. Ind.*, I, No. 13.

³ *Harṣacarita*, 218.

the sonsof the 'king' of Mālwa as their companions.¹ A little later, we are told that the eyes of "all kings" fell on the Imperial princess Rājyaśrī and that they sent envoys to request her hand.² Here independent sovereigns are certainly meant but by implication the great feudatories are also included in the expression 'all kings.' The marriage of the princess was attended by many "kings" and "queens."³ There is a clearer reference to feudatories when we are told that 'kings' decorated the palace, polished mosaic flowers, erected posts, etc., and that their "queens" enlivened the occasion by their songs.⁴ On his death-bed Prabhākaravardhana charged Harṣa, *inter alia*, to "make prize of feudatory kings."⁵ When preparing for his campaigns, Harṣa receives exhortations from princes who already acknowledged the suzerainty of his dynasty and were faithful to it. When actually starting on his campaigns, he was accompanied by a number of Sāmantas.⁶ In the encounter between Harṣa and Pulakesin, in which the former probably suffered a defeat, both the sovereigns were accompanied by a number of feudatories.⁷ In Harṣacarita a number of feudatories are seen waiting for an audience of the suzerain.⁸ Among others there was a forest chief who had earlier assisted Harṣa in the search for his sister. Bāṇa brings numerous tributary hill-chiefs on the scene.⁹ Relating his own experiences, he describes the camps of

¹ Ibid., p. 154.

² Ibid., p. 155.

³ Ibid., p. 156.

⁴ Ibid., 157-58.

⁵ Ibid., 188.

⁶ Ibid., 231, 240.

⁷ Ep. Ind., V, 202; VIII, 230; Ind Ant. VI, 87; VIII, 244; IX, 125; XI, 68; XIII, 74. Fleet, *Dynasties of the Kanarese District*, 350, Yuan Chwang, Watters, II, 239, Life, 147.

⁸ Harṣacarita, 170.

⁹ Ibid., 259.

'subject kings.' When called for an interview, he has to pass through three courts, crowded with "subject kings," before he meets Harṣa in the fourth.¹ The ranks of feudatories seem to have merged insensibly into those of aristocrats who were only large landowners. Thus, in his bereavement Harṣa is attended closely by many young nobles whose families had long enjoyed the favour of the Vardhana court.² The body of the dead king Prabhākara-vardhana was taken by nobles and townsmen headed by the family priest to the Saraswati.³

Some of the incidents noticed above serve to illustrate the tenure of the relations of the suzerain with the feudatories. The inscriptions and the writings of Yuan Chwang and Bāṇa
Relations of the suzerain and feudatories. throw some further light on the question.

The vassals adorn the court of the suzerain and send their sons to act as pages at his court and palace. They are sometimes anointed by the suzerain. They assist him with their forces in war. Rājyavardhana, starting on his campaign against the Huns, was attended by feudatories with their forces.⁴ Sometimes the suzerain entrusted them with important missions. Thus, the ruler of Jalandhar was placed by Harṣa in charge of matters relating to Buddhism to which he had been converted. "In this capacity (as Protector of the Faith)," continues Yuan Chwang, "the king of Jalandhar rewarded and punished the monks without distinction of persons and without private feeling. He also travelled through all India and erected topes or monasteries at all sacred places."⁵ It falls chiefly to him to see Yuan Chwang safe to the frontier.⁶ It appears

¹ Ibid., 68, 78.

² Ibid., 193.

³ Ibid., 190-91.

⁴ Ibid., 166.

⁵ Watters, I, 296.

⁶ Life, 189-90.

from the account of Yuan Chwang that Harṣavardhana, without interfering unduly in the internal affairs of feudatory states, tried to encourage good government therein. We are told that "the 'neighbouring' princes, and the statesmen, who were zealous in good works, and unwearied in their search for moral excellence he led to his own seat, and called 'good friends,' and he would not converse with those who were of a different character."¹ It may be presumed that neighbouring princes who consented to be treated in this fashion were not independent sovereigns but feudatories. With their ministers also the suzerain came into some touch. We hear of the presence of 200 such ministers from different kingdoms at the great religious assembly of Kanauj.² The occasional meetings of the suzerain and feudatories are likely to have reacted on politics and administration. Of the crowd of feudatories, eighteen or twenty seem to have been the most powerful and important. Yuan Chwang has described how, according to previous arrangement, they marched in Harṣa's train from Kanauj to Prayāga for the sixth quinquennial Mokṣapariṣad.³ It is clear from the Rohtāsgaḍh Stone Seal-matrix of the Mahāsāmanta Śaśāṅkadeva⁴ and the Nirmand Copper Plate Inscription of the Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja Samudrasena⁵ that the titles of feudatories were the same as those in the Gupta period. Their consorts could be called Paramadevi and Bhāṭṭārikā.

Beyond the circle of satellites and spheres of influence, the emperor stood in diplomatic relations with many powers. Bāṇa records the presence of ambassadors from Āndhra and Drāviḍa lands at

¹ Watters, I, 344. Beal, I, 214.

² Beal, I, 218-19.

³ Ibid., Life, 177, 186.

⁴ Fleet, No. 78.

⁵ Ibid., No. 80. Also Ep. Ind., XV, No. 19 (650 A.D.).

Harṣa's court.¹ From Chinese sources we learn that he exchanged diplomatic missions with China.²

The hypothesis of the relationships of suzerainty and vassalage in the Vardhana Empire is supported by the evidence of Kādambari, a prose romance which was composed by Bāṇabhaṭṭa³ under the patronage of Harṣa and which, details apart, may be held to reflect the dominant political conditions of the times. Feudatories abound in its pages. At the very commencement of the story, Śūdraka is painted as a second Indra, whose commands were honoured by the bent heads of all "kings," . . . who "had an army of neighbouring chiefs bowed down in loyalty to his Majesty." We are assured that he had the signs of a universal emperor.⁴ When the Caṇḍāla maiden is ushered in, she beholds the king in the midst of 1,000 chiefs.⁵ When the sun reaches its zenith and the hour of bath is at hand, the chiefs are dismissed from the audience-hall but they throng together to pay their respects to the king as he moves.⁶ When the time comes for Candrāpiḍa's consecration, he is anointed by the king surrounded by a thousand chiefs.⁷

When he leaves the hall of assembly, he is followed by a thousand chiefs and is soon met by "hosts of kings" who do him homage. Bāṇa's account of the Digvijaya which began on the morrow of Candrāpiḍa's consecration is interesting. "By degrees, as he wandered at will, he bowed the haughty, exalted the humble, encouraged the fearful, protect-

¹ Harṣacarita, 170.

² Sylvain Lévi, *Journal Asiatique*, 1900, tr. Ind. Ant., 1911, pp. 111 et seq.

³ After the death of Bāṇabhaṭṭa the romance was continued by his son.

⁴ Kādambari, tr. O. M. Ridding, p. 3.

⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁷ Ibid., 84.

ed the suppliant, rooted out the vicious, and drove out the hostile. He anointed princes in different places, gathered treasures, accepted gifts, took tribute, taught local regulations, established monuments of his visit, made hymns of worship and inscribed edicts . . ." So there were conquests in all quarters.¹ True, Candrâpîḍa is accompanied by an army but there is hardly any fighting. The prince seems to be dealing merely with his own feudatories. Here it must be noted that the suzerain anointed his vassals, took tribute from them and exacted obedience and submission from them. It is a striking proof of Bâṇa's fidelity to his age that the conclusions based on historical evidence are generally supported by his romance.

A few incidental notices in Yuan Chwang show that the status of feudatories sometimes altered and might considerably go down. There were cases of ruling families being replaced altogether by viceroys of the suzerain.

Change in the
status of feuda-
tories.

By the time of the Chinese pilgrim's visit, the royal family of Gandhâra was extinct and the "kingdom" was governed by deputies from Kapiśa.² Nagarahâra (the old capital of Jalâlâbâd territory) had no chief of its own at the time but was governed by a commandant and his subordinates from Kapiśa.³ In a similar manner Sinhapur was now a dependency of Kashmir.⁴

Not all the ruling families during this period belonged to the Kṣatriya caste. According to Yuan Chwang, Harṣa belonged to the Vaiśya caste.⁵ Yuan Chwang records a tradition that the kings of Kâmarûpa had been Brâhmaṇas for a

Caste of Ruling
Families.

¹ Ibid., 89-90.

² Beal, I, 98.

³ Ibid., 91.

⁴ Ibid., 143. For a curious tradition about Indian kingship, Ibid., 11.

⁵ Beal, I, 209.

thousand generations.¹ As already noted, some other ruling families came from the Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya or Śādra caste. Historical testimony thus confirms the impression, which the imprecations and prophecies of the Brāhmaṇas tend to produce, *viz.*, that the orthodox rule of Kṣatriya kingship was not infrequently violated.

The titles of the suzerain were the same in the seventh century as in the Gupta age. In the inscriptions,

The Suzerain's titles. Harṣavardhana is, like his brother and father, called Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja.² Bāṇa calls the Vardhana

suzerain Parameśvara, Cakravartin, lord of the fields bounded by the five oceans, sovereign of all continents.³ In the inscriptions Harṣavardhana's mother Yaśomati is called Mahādevī. According to Yuan Chwang, Harṣavardhana was warned by Avalokiteśvara not to assume the title Mahārāja. Thereupon, he "became king of Kanauj with the title Rājaputra and the style Śīlāditya."⁴ The former assertion is contradicted by the inscriptions but it is probable that Harṣa was during his lifetime known by the titles Rājaputra and Śīlāditya. A passage in Harṣacarita indicates that besides the umbrella, there were three other royal emblems—the *Simhāsana* or Lion-throne, a peculiar *Śayana* or couch and *Āsandī* or chair.⁵

Harṣa ruled in conjunction with his sister Rājyaśrī because the dominions of the two had been practically united.

Harṣa as administrator.

The capital of the empire was Kanauj, which seems to have been a magnificent city for several centuries. But in Yuan

¹ Beal, II, 196. Watters, II, 183. See also Beal, II, 270-71; Watters, II, 250-51.

For instances of Kṣatriya kingship, see Beal, I, 54, 82; II, 209.

² Sonpat Copper Seal Inscription of Harṣavardhana, Fleet, No. 52.

³ Harṣacarita, 85, 100.

⁴ Watters, I, 343.

⁵ Harṣacarita, 103.

Chwang's account the emperor is seen constantly on the move, except during the rains. Incessant travelling, whether on military expeditions, administrative tours, or from religious motives, was part of the personal conduct of the administration. The emperor never halted long at any place. Temporary buildings were erected at each station for his residence. These pavilions of travel, as they were called, were made of cut grass like huts or built of branches and boughs. They were burnt on the emperor's departure. But while they stood they were furnished with all the paraphernalia of a court. It was at such a temporary court at Kajughira in Bengal that Yuan Chwang first met the emperor. On extraordinary occasions which drew together large numbers of feudatories, such temporary structures could be seen even at Kanauj. The emperor divided the day into three periods, devoting one to affairs of government and two to religious works—a rather disproportionate distribution of time. We are assured that Harṣa found the day too short for him. "He forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works."¹

In spite of his devotion to duty and religion, Harṣa maintained the traditional pomp and glory of sovereignty.

Even while he was on tour, his porters carried his golden foot-stools, water-pots, cups, spittoons and baths. There were

The Emperor's
pomp and glory.

bearers of kitchen appurtenances with goats attached to thongs of pig-skin, etc.² The royal dress comprised a snow-white lower garment with short silk-threads, a bejewelled girdle, and a thin upper garment spangled with worked stars.³ There was a certain manner of beating the drums which was a royal monopoly and could be used by no one

¹ Yuan Chwang, Watters, I, 344; II, 183, Beal, I, 215; II, 193. Life, 173, 177.

² Harṣacarita, 227, 237.

³ Ibid., 80.

else.¹ The tradition of keeping women attendants was maintained. There were female chowrie-bearers and shampooers.² Eunuchs were also employed at the court and palace.³ Royal ladies had their own attendants.⁴ Court festivities sometimes exceeded all bounds of decorum. Bâṇa's description of celebrations on the birth of Harṣa does not make very pleasant reading.⁵

The king's court, consisting of feudatories, ministers, chief personages, poets,⁶ and favourites, presented a glittering spectacle. Bâṇa has given an account

The Court.

of Harṣa's camp at Maṇitâra on the Ajirâvatî, surrounded by the camps of renowned "subject kings" with all their separate retinues. There were numbers of elephants, horses and camels. Over the whole scene waved umbrellas with thousands of stirring chowries. It comprised four different sets of apartments, three of which, the outer ones, were filled by feudatory chiefs. In the fourth, under a pavilion, on a throne of pearl-like stone, sat the emperor with his feet resting on a foot-stool of sapphire and ruby. Yuan Chwang has described how the emperor marched to Kanauj followed by several hundreds of thousand people, along the southern bank of the Ganges, while Kumâra Râja, attended by tens of thousands, took his place on the northern bank. The two kings led the way with their gorgeous staff of soldiers, "some also were in boats, some were on elephants, sounding drums and blowing horns, playing on flutes and harps."⁷ As in Persia, in the later Roman Empire and, under the medieval Mughals, the

¹ Yuan Chwang, *Life*, p. 173.

² Harṣacarita, 83, 177.

³ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 142, 181.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 144 et seq. For marriage festivities, 157 et seq.

⁶ For poets at the court, *Ep. Ind.*, I, 180.

⁷ Yuan Chwang, *Beal*, *Si-yu-ki*, I, 218.

etiquette of the court smacked of servility. Yuan Chwang relates how on one occasion princes were prostrate at the feet of the suzerain.¹ Yet the fact of being a courtier carried some prestige. When after his reception by Harṣa, the poet Bāṇa returned home, he received an affectionate welcome and congratulations from all and was lionised in the neighbourhood.²

The permanent seat of the empire, as usual, presented a glorious spectacle. Bāṇa testifies that Sthānviśvara, when capital of the kingdom, resounded with sounds of triumph, beating of drums, songs of troubadours and minstrels. The palace was magnificent and had a white-washed street wall.³ Of Kanauj Yuan Chwang writes that "it was very strongly defended and had lofty structures everywhere; there were beautiful gardens and tanks of clear water, and in it rarities from strange lands were collected . . .".⁴

The household establishment of the king was a large one. There were the bodyguard, chowrie-bearers, chamberlains, door-keepers, ushers, porters, cooks, a chef, etc., etc. There were hereditary royal physicians. Purohitas and Paṇḍitas were there.⁵

Some passages in Kādambari bring out the royal luxury of the 7th century A.D. in extraordinarily vivid colours. When the roar of the drum, followed by the blast of the conch, announced mid-day, the king dismissed

¹ Ibid., I, 220.

² Harṣacarita, 93. A passage in Harṣacarita, 88-89, shows that the court was dismissed about sunset.

³ Harṣacarita, 158, 170, 171, 179. Cf. the idealised picture of Ujjayini in Kādambari, tr. Ridding, 47. The towns and villages of the North-west made a poor impression on Yuan Chwang. (Beal, I, 73).

⁴ Ibid., 70, 68, 171, 178.

⁵ Harṣacarita, 70, 68, 98, 161, 171, 178.

the court, rose from the hall of audience and took exercise in the hall of exercise with princes of his own age. He then entered the bathing place, which was covered with a white canopy, and had numerous inscriptions of bardic verses. "..... It had a gold bath, filled with scented water in its midst, with a crystal bathing seat placed by it, and was adorned with pitchers placed on one side, full of most fragrant waters,..... The handmaidens..... duly besprinkled the king. Straightway there arose a blare of the trumpets sounded for bathing, penetrating all the hollows of the universe, accompanied by the din of song, lute, flute, drum, cymbal, and tabor..... mingled with the uproar of a multitude of bards....." After bath and worship, his limbs were "anointed in the perfuming-room with sandal-wood, sweetened with the fragrance of saffron, camphor and musk....." After his meal and chewing of betel, he rose from his dais "with its bright mosaic pavement." A portress, standing close by, hastened to him and "leaning on her arm, he went to the hall of audience, followed by attendants worthy to enter the inner apartments." A long description is given of the hall, which showed as "though walled with crystal by reason of the white silk that draped its ends." Reclining on his couch, "while a maiden seated on the ground, having placed in her bosom the dagger she was wont to bear, gently rubbed his feet..... the king rested for a short time, and held converse on many a theme, with the 'king's' ministers and friends whose presence was meet for the hour."¹

While the royal pomp subdued the imagination of the multitude, the unstinted royal generosity won their affection and gratitude. Yuan Chwang has recorded that even while travelling, Harṣa provided food and drink everyday for 1,000 Buddhist

¹ Kādambarī, tr. Ridding, pp. 11-14.

monks and 500 Brâhmaṇas.¹ Every year he gathered Buddhist Śramāṇs from all 'countries' and on the 3rd and 7th days bestowed on them the four kinds of alms—food, drink, medicine and clothing. Yuan Chwang was offered, though he declined, 10,000 pieces of gold, 30,000 pieces of silver, 100 garments of superior cotton, while the eighteen feudatory chiefs wanted to present him rare jewels.

Royal generosity reached its zenith at the quinquennial Mokṣapariṣad. Yuan Chwang has it that Prayāga, as modern Allāhābād was called in ancient times, had from of old been the scene of charity on the part of kings and noble families. An extensive area on the bank of the Ganges was called 'the great charity-enclosure.' "At the present time," continues the Chinese pilgrim, "Śīlāditya-rāja, after the example of his ancestors, distributes here in one day the accumulated wealth of five years. Immense piles of wealth and jewels were collected in the charity enclosure; the most costly jewels were offered a statue of Buddha. Afterwards, charity to the residentiary priests, then to priests (from a distance) who are present; then to men of distinguished talent; then to resident heretics following the ways of the world; lastly, to the widows and bereaved, orphans and desolate, poor and mendicants. Having exhausted his treasures and given food in charity, he gives away his diadem and his jewelled necklaces . . ."² Such seems to have been the fashion of the age. Yuan Chwang records that the king of Kapiśa held a similar Mokṣapariṣad and gave liberally to the needy, to widows and to widowers.³ Elsewhere, too, the Chinese pilgrim bears testimony to the generosity of Indian rulers.⁴

¹ Yuan Chwang, Watters, II, 344.

² Beal, Si-yu-ki, I, 214, 221, 233. For Prayāga, p. 230.

³ Yuan Chwang, Watters I, 122-123. Cf. Beal, I, 49.

⁴ Ibid., 176.

The succession to the throne was, as usual, hereditary and went by the rule of primogeniture. When on the death of Prabhâkaravardhana, Prince Râjyavardhana offers to resign the throne in favour of his younger brother, the latter violently protests.¹ But the incidents connected with the accession of Harṣa throw light on the manner in which emergencies were got over. When the news of Râjyavardhana's murder was received, the chief minister Bhaṇḍi, who was a near relation of the royal dynasty and whose power and reputation were high and of much weight, addressed the assembled ministers, "The destiny of the nation is to be fixed to-day. The old king's son is dead: the brother of the prince, however, is humane and affectionate, and his disposition, heaven-conferred, is dutiful and obedient. Because he is strongly attached to his family, the people will trust in him. I propose that he assume the royal authority, let each one give his opinion on this matter, whatever he thinks." All agreed. The chief ministers and officers all exhorted Harṣa to assume the royal authority. "... The opinion of the people, as shown in their songs, proves their real submission to your eminent qualities. Reign, then, with glory over the land; conquer the enemies of your family; wash out the insult laid on your kingdom and the deeds of your illustrious father. Great will your merit be in such a case. We pray you not reject our prayer." According to the account of Bâṇabhaṭṭa it was the Senâpati Simhanâda who proposed the installation of Harṣa. In either case the duty is performed by a high officer of state. Yuan Chwang continues that the young prince replied, "The government of a country is a responsible office and ever attended with difficulties. The duties of a prince require previous consideration. As for myself, I

¹ Harṣacarita, 200 et seq.

am indeed of small eminence ; but as my father and brother are no more, to reject the heritage of the crown, that can bring no benefit to the people. I must attend to the opinion of the world and forget my own insufficiency. . . .” Yuan Chwang adds that in his affliction and crisis, the young man betook himself to a statue of Avalokiteśvara and was warned not to use the lion-throne and “call not yourself Mahârāja.” Harṣa duly assumed the royal office and began to issue commands to the ministers.¹ Making all allowance for picturesque effect in the Chinese narrative, the outline may be accepted as true. From the last incident it will appear that several varieties of thrones were known in ancient India, that the lion-throne signified some extravagance or vanity. That the *Simhāsana* or lion-throne was well-known in the 7th century is clear from Yuan Chwang himself. He records of a North-Western state that the large and high lion-throne of the reigning sovereign was much adorned with precious gems, that it was covered with extremely fine drapery, and that its footstool was adorned with gems.² Perhaps the high-sounding titles too were not universally liked.

The details of a consecration in the 7th century A.D. may be inferred from some passages in *Kādambarī* where

Consecration. Prince Candrâpīḍa is anointed king. True, here the ceremony is led by his own father

but for the rest, the description may be as applicable to the consecration of a king as of a Yuvarāja. “. . . On an auspicious day,” says the romance, “the king, surrounded by a thousand chiefs, raised aloft, with Śukanāsa’s help, the vessel of consecration, and himself anointed his son,

¹ Yuan Chwang in Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, I, 210—213. In the Banskhera Plate of the year 628-29 A.D., Harṣa probably with his own hand subscribes himself as Mahârājādhirāja (*svahasto mama Mahârājāśrī Harṣasya*). *Ep. Ind.*, IV, No. 29.

² Beal, I, 75.

while the rest of the rites were performed by the family priest. The water of consecration was brought from every sacred pool, river and ocean encircled by every plant, fruit, earth and gem . . . and purified by mantras . . . straightway he was anointed from head to foot by Vilāsavati (his mother) attended by all ladies . . . with sweet sandal white as moonbeams. He was garlanded with fresh white flowers; decked with lines of gorocana; adorned with an earring of dārvā grass; clad in two silken robes with long fringes, white as the moon; bound with an amulet round his hand, tied by the family priest; and had his breast encircled by a pearl necklace. . . .” He was completely covered over with wreaths of white flowers. “Then his father himself for that time took the chamberlain’s wand to make way for him and he went to the hall of assembly . . . Then, when he had received due homage from the kings (chiefs?), after a short pause the great drum that heralded his setting out on his triumphal course resounded deeply, under the stroke of golden sticks . . . Then, at the roar of the drum, followed by an outcry of ‘All hail!’ from all sides, Candrāpīḍa came down from the throne, . . . He left the hall of assembly, followed by a thousand chiefs who rose hastily round him . . .”¹ Seated on an elephant, under an umbrella “with a hundred wires enmeshed with pearls . . .” he made his progress and received the homage of hosts of “kings,” who bowed low before him “as a trusted general recited their names . . .” Turning slowly towards the eastern quarter, Candrāpīḍa at last reached his palace. It was adorned with many triumphal arches; dotted with a thousand pavilions enclosed in grassy ramparts, and bright with many a tent of shining white cloth. Like a king, he performed all due rites. Next morning he started on his Digvijaya and made “conquests in all quarters.” The

¹ Kādambarī, tr. Ridding, 84–89.

consort was anointed along with the king. "Upon this head," says the widow of Prabhākaravardhana, "have the subservient wives of countless feudatories poured coronation water from golden ewers."¹ It was in great "conquests" that a Hindu consecration was expected to culminate. It is a striking coincidence that Harṣa's accession to the throne was actually followed by six years of Digvijaya. As usual, the reigns of extraordinarily powerful sovereigns were associated with new eras. The era of Harṣa dates from his accession in October, 606.²

On the education of the princes a great deal of care was bestowed by the sovereign. The young princes

The Prince. Rājyavardhana and Harṣavardhana were placed in charge of their maternal uncle Bhaṇḍi who occupied an important position in the state. Sons of a great feudatory ruler were appointed their companions. They were given an excellent military training. Harṣa is reputed to have been a poet and dramatist but even if the plays attributed to him be adjudged the handiwork of a court poet, there is no reason to doubt the tradition of the emperor's literary accomplishments. Bāṇa, in fact, positively asserts that Harṣa was a great poet. Princes were often given high command or provincial governorships. Thus Rājyavardhana was sent by his father Prabhākaravardhana against the Huns while Harṣa followed with a cavalry force.³

Bāṇa's Kādambarī throws some additional light on the practice of the age. Its account of an Ujjain prince's education is obviously romantic but is not without some bearing on actual facts.

A Kādambarī account.

For his son Candrāpiḍa, six years old, King Tārāpiḍa built "a palace of learning outside the

¹ Harṣacarita, 186.

² Kielhorn, Ind. Ant., XXVI, 32.

³ Harṣacarita, 151, 154, 166.

city, stretching half a league along the Siprâ river . . . with stables for horses and palanquins close by and a gymnasium constructed beneath. He took infinite pains in gathering there teachers of every science, and having placed the boy there, like a young lion in a cage, forbidding all egress surrounding him with a suite composed mainly of the sons of his teachers, removing every allurements to the sports of boyhood, and on an auspicious day he entrusted him, together with Vaisampâyana (the minister's son), to masters that they might acquire all knowledge." Every day the king visited the prince. In an eloquent, high-flown passage, the novelist relates that the prince mastered the sciences, arts, crafts, music, the Epics, the Purâṇas, foreign languages, all kinds of writing, prosody, etc., etc.¹ On the completion of his education in ten years the prince was asked ceremoniously to return home.² Escorted by "three thousand princes, all sons of anointed kings," the prince passed in a procession through the city,³ and then entered the court to be received affectionately by his parents and all present.⁴ Thenceforward, the prince lives a life of comfort, even luxury. He goes out to hunt. He has numerous attendants. Among others, Patralekhâ, daughter of the "king" of Kulûta, captured in war in her childhood, was appointed his betel-bearer by his mother and became his companion and confidential advisor.⁵ The king makes over the throne to him and has him regularly anointed with the help of feudatories. Before his consecration, the minister Śukanâsa gives him a lengthy discourse on his position and duties.⁶

¹ Kâdambarî, tr. Ridding, pp. 59-61.

² Ibid., pp. 61-63.

³ Ibid., 63-65.

⁴ Ibid., 70-71.

⁵ Ibid., 73-75.

⁶ Ibid., 76-86.

Besides the sons of a king, his other relations might occupy important positions in the state. There is a Chinese notice that in the north-west King's relations. a king, when starting on a pilgrimage, entrusted the kingdom to his brother.¹

The administrative system of the seventh century A.D. is practically the same as that of the Gupta age. A few additional details are forthcoming from Bānabhaṭṭa, Yuan Chwang and from Ministers. A chief minister stands out more clearly than in the data of the Gupta period. Bhaṇḍi, closely related to the royal family, is admittedly superior to all.² The incidents connected with the accession of Harṣa make it clear that all the chief ministers met together to discuss important questions. For the north-west outside the dominions of Harṣa there is an interesting Chinese notice that the king and ministers met together for consultation on affairs of state on the 15th and last day of the month, and then took counsel of the chief priest and finally published their decrees.³ Harṣacarita indicates that ministers were also consulted individually by the king. For instance, Skandagupta, the commandant of the elephant force, is seen urging Harṣa to universal conquest.⁴ In Harṣacarita, the chief military officer—'foremost in every fight'—is called Senāpati.⁵ The war-elephant on which he rode is covered with coat-of-mail, and his tusks are provided with sharp barbs. There was

¹ Beal, I, 22-23.

² Harṣacarita, 228; Beal, I, 211; Watters, I, 343. Cf. Kādambarī (49-51, 76-84) where the Brāhmaṇa Śukanāsa, deeply versed in the arts and sciences and in politics, presides over the administration and gives advice to Prince Candrāpīḍa.

³ Beal, I, 22.

⁴ Harṣacarita, 222, 225, 240.

⁵ Ibid., 212.

"a soldier on each side to manage the elephant."¹ The commander of the cavalry was another high military officer.² As before, the Mahāsāmdhivigrahika is the foreign minister.³ The Pramātri is a counsellor and high officer of state. In the Madhuban Plate Inscription, the office is occupied by the Mahāsāmanta Mahārāja Skandagupta who also acts as the Dātaka.⁴ Incidentally it appears that feudatories were employed in high offices directly under the suzerain. The supposition is strengthened by the mention of Mahāsāmantas and Mahārājas in the same breath with regular officers in the Madhuban Plates. Among other officers one of the most notable is the Dauhsādhanika, one who is entrusted with difficult undertakings, a high police officer.⁵ Kumārāmātyas, Rājas-thānīyas (viceroy), Viśayapatis (district officers), and Uparikas (revenue officers) are common to the Vardhana and Gupta inscriptions. The Mahākṣapaṭalika was the great keeper of records. Yuan Chwang states that an accurate record of all happenings was kept.⁶ The mention of Āyuktakas, subordinate officers,⁷ and Cāṭas or police, in Harṣacarita supplies another link with the Gupta times. Again, Cāṭas are debarred from entering agrahāras, probably because their visitations meant some financial

¹ Watters, I, 171; Beal I, 83.

² Harṣacarita, 209, see also 220.

³ Ibid., 218.

⁴ Ep. Ind., I, No. 11. See also the Valabhi grant of Dhruvasena III, Ep. Ind., I, No. 13.

⁵ Ind. Ant., XIV, p. 167. The Tipperah Copper Plate grant of Lokanātha (from East Bengal) of the year 650 A.D., shortly after the death of Harṣa, shows hereditary Mahāsāmantas and Sāmantas occupying the post of Kumārāmātya (Ep. Ind., XV, No. 19). Two grants of Dhruvasena II, of the year 639-40 A.D., from Central India show the same system of Bhuktis and Viśayas (Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 20).

⁶ Ep. Ind., IV, 211. Watters, I, 154.

⁷ Harṣacarita, 237, 286.

exactions. There are numerous policemen and tax-collectors in Harṣacarita. There is an interesting notice that in the course of the emperor's march through a village, the Akṣapaṭalika or keeper of records, came out with a number of karanis or clerks to meet the emperor, to ask for his commands and to receive a golden seal and another emblem from him.¹ Elsewhere, too, there is mention of sakalakara-piparikara which shows that many persons were associated in the administration of the village or the next higher unit of rural administration.² Drāṅgika, as before, is the town-officer who, from his designation, seems also to have performed some revenue functions. The mention of Mahattaras with him shows that the chief personages of a place were informally associated with the administration or were at least consulted by the officers. There are numerous couriers who carry messages to and fro.³ The Life of Yuan Chwang supplies an interesting touch that the emperor's letters were written on fine, white cotton stuff and sealed with red wax.⁴

The remuneration of officers seems to have taken the form of grants of land, made according to the importance of the various positions. Yuan Chwang states that the king set apart $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the crown lands for the endowment of great public servants and another $\frac{1}{4}$ for the expenses of government and state-worship. The two heads partly overlap and it appears that official remuneration consumed more than one-fourth of the revenue. "The governors, magistrates and officials have each a

¹ Ibid., 227.

² Ibid., 274.

³ Harṣacarita, 59, 160, 168, 179. Beal, I, 215; Life, 169.

⁴ Life, p. 190. For officials, compare the Tipperah Copper Plate Grant of Lokanātha (from East Bengal) of the year 650 A.D., which mentions the same official designations and feudatory titles. (Ep. Ind., XV, No. 19.)

portion of land consigned to them for their personal support." Yuan Chwang goes on to state that forced labour was "sparingly used." The assertion may be accepted as true for Harṣa's reign.¹ Bāṇa has recorded that on Harṣa's rush from the north-west to the capital at the news of his father's illness, footmen were sent ahead to secure a relay of villagers to show the way.² We are not told that the villagers were paid anything. Perhaps, it was on such occasions that the little forced labour, implied in Yuan's statement, was exacted.

In the latter half of the seventh century I-tsing made an incidental remark on the recruitment of state-officials

Recruitment
of officials.

which may be equally applicable to the first half of the century. Scholars who defeated their opponents in scholastic con-

troversies were not only gratified with grants of land and the proclamation of their names and achievements in schools but also received high posts in the service of the state.³ There is nothing improbable in the fact that government recruited men of recognised talents for certain offices which demanded an intellectual background.

The sources of revenue in the 7th century A.D. were the same as in the preceding ages. Yuan

Revenue.

Chwang's verdict that the taxes were light may be accepted. Agriculture was, of course, the dominant occupation of the people. "All till the ground for their subsistence." We are told that those who cultivated the royal estates paid $\frac{1}{6}$ th of the produce as rent. Yuan Chwang perhaps seems to regard the whole territory directly governed by the king as his estates. Royal estates are opposed to feudatory domains where revenue

¹ Watters, I, p. 176. Beal, I, 87-88.

² Harṣacarita, p. 170.

³ I-tsing, *Buddhist Practices, etc.*, tr. Takakusu, p. 178.

would naturally be paid to feudal chiefs. The Madhuban Plate Inscription mentions the Gupta imposts—Udraṅga, Uparikara, Hiranya, etc. Next to the land revenue, customs formed the most important head of receipt. In the Madhuban Plates there is a tax on things sold. It seems that merchants were required to pay some additional tolls at the ferries and fords on the rivers and at many points on the highways. From some passages in Bâṇa it is clear that some of the feudatories, for instance, hill chieftains, paid tribute. Presents came from all who had any occasion to see the king. Bâṇa himself was, for a while, refused admittance to the king's presence, because he had not offered his tribute of respect which, in the context, can only mean a present. In another passage Bâṇa implies that even villagers made presents to the king when he passed through their habitations. It appears that even under excellent kings the collection of regular taxes sometimes led to oppression by petty officials. On one occasion in Harṣacarita, people bitterly complain against revenue and police officials.¹

Bâṇa implies that justice was administered by Mīmāṃsaka-
Justice. kas.² It is, however, from Yuan Chwang that one obtains a clear idea of the administration of justice in the 7th century A.D. in the north of India. His account which relates primarily to the North-west, differs markedly in many details from that of the theoreticians Nârada and Brihaspati but in principles it confirms them in a most striking manner. Yuan Chwang came to the conclusion that criminals or rebels were few and serious

¹ Harṣacarita, 87—90, 230, 243, 286. Watters, I, 176. Beal, I, 87. Ep. Ind., I, p. 87. The existence of the same fiscal system in Central India is proved by two grants of Dhruvasena II, of the year 639-40 A.D., Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 20. For records and archives, Watters, I, 154.

² Harṣacarita, 86.

trouble was only occasional. "When the laws are broken or the power of the ruler violated, then the matter is clearly sifted" Torture was not used to elicit confession. "In the investigation of criminal cases there is no use of rod or staff to obtain proofs." But there were a few ordeals which were resorted to when the accused persisted in denying the charge. In the water ordeal, "the accused is placed in a sack connected with a stone vessel and thrown into deep water If the man sinks and the stone floats, he is guilty; but if the man floats and the stone sinks, then he is pronounced innocent." In the ordeal by fire, "they heat a plate of iron and make the accused sit on it, and again place his feet on it, and apply it to the palms of his hands; moreover, he is made to pass his tongue over it; if no scars result, he is innocent; if there are scars, his guilt is proved. In case of weak and timid persons who cannot endure such ordeal, they take a flower bud and cast it towards the fire; if it opens, he is innocent; if the flower is burnt he is guilty." In the ordeal by weight, a man and a stone were placed evenly in a balance. "Then they judge according to lightness or weight." If the accused were innocent, he would weigh down the stone which would rise in the balance. If he were guilty, the man would rise and the stone fall.¹ Lastly, "the poison ordeal requires that the right hind leg of a ram be cut off, and according to the portion assigned to the accused to eat, poisons are put into the leg, and if the man is innocent he survives, and if not the poison takes effect."² It will be observed that while the water and particularly, the fire ordeals are serious enough, the others are almost frivolous. Perhaps the theory was that divine opinion and judgment

¹ Yuan Chwang, *Beal*, I, 84-85; *Watters*, I, 172.

² *Watters*, I, 172.

had to be invoked. It is again probable that ordeals were resorted to only in cases where no decisive oral or documentary evidence was forthcoming.

The punishments were various and, on the whole, severe. Yuan Chwang's statement that corporal punishment was non-existent is contradicted by himself and opposed to all we know of the ancient Hindu penal code. If a man violated "the rules of propriety, justice, fidelity or filial piety," his nose or his ears were cut off, or his hands or his feet were amputated, or he was expelled from the country or he was driven into the desert wilds. For certain crimes which the Chinese traveller does not specify, the offenders were imprisoned. Yuan Chwang seems to imply, though he is not perfectly clear on the point, that imprisonment was extremely severe. The prisoners were not counted among men and were simply left to live or die.¹ But there is a passage in *Bāṇa* which shows that prison conditions were not so horrible. On auspicious occasions, like the birth of a prince, the king commanded the release of prisoners.² Minor offences were punished with fines. In certain north-western principalities, murder was punished by banishment to the desolate mountains.³ Treason, though always regarded as a heinous crime, was sometimes punished only by banishment. Five hundred Brāhmaṇas who were implicated in a conspiracy against the king were exiled by Harṣa, though the ministers and feudatories loudly demanded the extermination of the whole tribe. The king's friends urged that the conspirators' agent, who actually assaulted Harṣa, should be instantaneously put to death. The king, however, kept his head and closely interrogated the man. We are not told how he was ultimately punished.⁴

¹ Ibid., I, 83, 214.

³ Harṣacarita, p. 143.

² Beal, I, 188.

⁴ Beal, 220-21.

The army of Harṣa, at the time of his accession, comprised 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry.

By the time of Yuan Chwang's visit, the cavalry had gone up to 100,000

and the elephant corps to the staggering figure of 60,000. From a passage in Harṣacarita it appears that there was also a camel corps. As usual, other princes in ancient India also commanded big armies. For instance, Kumāra of Kāmarūpa visited Harṣa with 20,000 elephants. It is clear from Bāṇa that Harṣa acquired a good many elephants as tribute or presents. Horses were imported from Western regions such as Sindh, modern Afghānistān and Persia. Besides the regular military officers there were a number of superintendents of soldiers' barracks. A huge staff of fodderers, grooms and superintendents managed the royal stables.¹ Speaking of a North-western state, Yuan states that troops were levied according to requirements, that recruitment was done by public proclamation and that rewards were promised. A select body of guards were recruited from heroes of choice valour, a sort of hereditary military aristocracy.² Some difficulty was experienced in maintaining internal order and security in the seventh century. Soldiers were requisitioned to perform police functions. On his way back, the Chinese pilgrim was provided with a military escort. He has left it on record that the military, besides guarding the frontier, went out to punish the refractory and mounted guard at night round the palace.³ Towns, even of a small size, appear to have been often enclosed by walls, though these were far from impregnable. Soon after the death of Harṣa, a retributive Tibetan expedition sent by Srong-tsan

¹ Watters, I, 343. Beal, I, 213. Harṣacarita, 66, 70, 72, 228.

² Watters, I, 171. Beal, I, 87.

³ Beal I, 87; Life, p. 191.

Gampo is said to have captured 580 walled towns. Many of these could hardly have been much larger than villages.¹

Speaking of a north-western state, Yuan says that the administration was founded on benign principles and that

The Spirit and
Activity of Gov-
ernment.

the rules of government were marked by rectitude. His judgment on Harṣa's regime is even more favourable. It may be

accepted that Hindu governance was generally benevolent in the seventh century A.D. But rulers could sometimes be intolerant and oppressive. Śaśāṅka of Bengal persecuted the Buddhists. Even a righteous ruler like Kumāra could sometimes be arbitrary. When Śilabhadra, the head of the monastery of Nālanda, twice refused to send Yuan to Kumāra, the latter threatened that he would "let the evil portion of him prevail" and would "equip his army and elephants to raze to the ground the whole monastery of Nālanda." The poor abbot promptly complied with the peremptory demand.² The Chinese pilgrim emphasises that there was no registration of families. But from his own account, as from that of Bāṇa, it is clear that at least the government of Harṣa interested itself most actively in the higher life as well as in the material comforts of the community. Harṣacarita shows that state or private beneficence was responsible for the foundation of numerous alms-houses, rest-houses and water-places.³ In some respects Harṣa seems to have followed the policy of Aśoka. Throughout his dominions he forbade the slaughter of any living thing and interdicted meat-diet on pain of death without pardon. He erected several thousands of Stūpas on the banks of the Ganges. He erected Saṅghārāmas at all places where there were any holy traces of the Buddha. On all the highways which ran through towns and villages,

¹ Sylvain Lévi, tr. Ind. Ant., 1911, pp. 111 et seq.

² Yuan, Life, 170, 171, 187; Beal, I, 87.

³ Harṣacarita, 176.

he established hospitals, appointed physicians therein, arranged for the distribution of medicine, food and drink to travellers and poor people around in an unstinted measure, free of all charge.¹ He arranged scholastic assemblies for discussions and himself judged on the arguments advanced. He honoured character and learning in all individuals, rewarded the good and promoted men of talent.² "If there was any irregularity in the manners of the people of the cities, he went amongst them."³ The higher activities of the state in the 7th century A.D., were according to Yuan Chwang, financed with great generosity. Speaking of the north-west he remarks that the income from the land was divided into four parts, the first was for carrying out the affairs of state and providing sacrificial offerings; the second for providing subsidies to ministers and chief officers of state, the third for rewarding men of distinguished ability and the fourth for charity to religious bodies.⁴ Whether Harṣa also actually divided his income regularly in this fashion we cannot be sure. But it is clear that he must have spent a good deal on religion and learning. The accounts of the Buddhist celebrations are interesting. The gorgeous processions were escorted by Harṣa and Kumâra, each with 500 war-elephants clad in armour; in front of the statue of the Buddha as well as behind it marched another 100 big elephants, carrying musicians who sounded their drums and raised their music.⁵ When Harṣa made an expedition to Koṅgoda in Orissâ, he held a religious assembly there and summoned to it four Buddhist masters from Nâlanda. He exerted himself energetically in the propagation of Mahâyâna Buddhism and offered to assign the revenue of 80

¹ Beal, I, 214.

² Ibid., I, 214; Watters, I, 161.

³ Beal, I, 215.

⁴ Ibid. I, 87.

⁵ Ibid., 218-219.

towns in Orissâ to the learned Buddhist Jayasena. The practice of the state endowment of religion and piety was common to the whole of north India. For instance the king of Kapiśa commissioned five pure men to make continuous offerings of scents and flowers to Buddhist relics.¹ Other rulers in the north-west favoured various religions.² The Chinese pilgrim records numerous instances of Buddhist monarchs and nobles who built Stûpas and Vihâras, organised religious festivals, discussions and assemblies.³ Harṣa-vardhana's Brahmanical ancestors had celebrated sacrifices on a grand scale. In his pompous style Bâna records that under the rule of Prabhâkaravardhana the golden age seemed to bud forth in close packed lines of sacrificial posts, the evil time to flee in the smoke of sacrifices meandering over the sky and heaven to descend in stuccoed shrines.⁴ As to the patronage of learning Bâna seems to reflect facts when in his romance he paints king Śûdraka as a founder of literary societies and a refuge for men of taste.⁵ In the latter half of the seventh century A.D. I-tsing noted how young scholars went to debate at the courts of kings in the hope of receiving government employment. Often the kings bestowed grants of land on the scholars. At any rate victory in the discussions brought wide fame.⁶

In spite of the career of Śaśânka who is said to have uprooted the Bodhi tree and destroyed the "Law" so far as he could,⁷ religious toleration must be held to be the rule in the seventh century in India. The "Life" and account of Yuan testify

¹ Ibid., I, 176.

² Ibid., II, 107 et seq.

³ Harṣacarita, 138.

⁴ Kâdambari, tr. Ridding, p. 9.

⁵ I-tsing, Buddhist Practices, etc., tr. Takakusu, 177-78.

⁶ Watters, I, 343; Life, 171.

⁷ Beal, I, 97.

abundantly to the catholicity of the Brahmanic Kumâra. Bâṇa speaks of the presence of Jainas, Ârhatas, Pâśupatas, Brâhmanas and mendicants of the school of Parâśara at the court of Harṣa.¹ Planning a big religious assembly, the emperor sent commands from Kajughira in Bengal to the different "kingdoms" that followers of all the various sects and schools should attend. So the Kanauj assembly included 3,000 Mahâyâna and Hinayâna Buddhists, nearly 1,000 Buddhist scholars from Nâlanda, and 3,000 Brâhmanas and Nirgranthas.² The discussions were conducted in the usual scholastic fashion. For instance, Yuan Chwang propounded a thesis, posted it outside the assembly-hall and challenged its refutation.³ The practice of holding such assemblies was widespread and of long duration. Yuan was told that king Vikramâditya who had been renowned for his charity all over India had summoned a religious gathering to discuss spiritual doctrines.⁴ The Chinese pilgrim speaks of numerous other rulers who had done the same and records some anecdotes. One of the kings is said to have proclaimed that "whoever is defeated shall die, as a proof of his inferiority."⁵ On another occasion a great discussion was conducted in a big hall in the presence of a king, his ministers and a vast concourse. When Mâdhava, one of the controversialists, happened to die, his widow occupied his place and took up the cudgels.⁶ In such gatherings feeling sometimes ran high. On the occasion of one of Harṣa's assemblies, it was rumoured that the life of Yuan Chwang was in danger. The emperor issued a proclamation to the effect that "if any one should

¹ Harṣacarita, 170.

² Beal, I, 218.

³ Ibid., I, 218, 219, 221.

⁴ Ibid., I, 106.

⁵ Ibid., II, 99.

⁶ Ibid., II, 107.

touch or hurt the Master of the Law, he shall be forthwith executed; and whoever speaks against him, his tongue shall be cut out; but all those who desire to profit by his instructions, relying on my good will, need not fear this manifesto."¹

Harṣa was something of an eclectic. In spite of his strong Buddhist sympathies, he honoured Brāhmaṇas and offered worship to Brahmanic gods. He
 Jealousies. invited Brāhmaṇa scholars to the Mokṣa-pariṣad and other functions and bestowed valuable gifts on them. But it appears that the lion's share of his charities went to Buddhists. At the sixth Mokṣapariṣad a man attempted the life of the king and, when arrested and closely cross-questioned by the latter, replied, "Great king, you have assembled the people of different countries and exhausted your treasures in offerings to the Śramaṇas, and cast a metal image of the Buddha; but the heretics (Brāhmaṇas) who have come from a distance have scarcely been spoken to. Their minds therefore have been affected with resentment and they procured me . . . to undertake this unlucky deed."²

During this period royal munificence was responsible for the foundation or maintenance of big monasteries and
 Nālanda. academies which, without any stretch of language, may be called universities. For instance, the revenues of a hundred villages had been remitted for the support of Nālanda, the great centre of Buddhist piety and learning. Six successive kings had added to its endowments and buildings until it assumed the status of an all-India institution. Yuan has left a glowing description of its "richly adorned towers, and the fairy-like turrets, like pointed hill-tops," congregated together. "The observatories seem to be lost in the vapours (of the

¹ Life, pp. 179-80.

² Beal, I, 220-21, 218; II, 198, 261.

morning), and the upper rooms tower above the clouds . . . All the outside courts, in which are the priests' chambers, are of four stages. The stages have dragon-projections, and coloured eaves, the pearl-red pillars, carved and ornamented, the richly adorned balustrades, and the roofs covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades . . ." Here were gathered 1,510 teachers who altogether delivered 100 discourses a day on different subjects. The number of students is put at 10,000. Adherents of different persuasions came from all over the country to challenge Nālanda monks to discussion. The Chinese pilgrim who studied here for several years adds that "the saṅghārāmas of India are counted by myriads but this (Nālanda) is the most remarkable for grandeur and height."¹ So it appears that there were numerous smaller seats of learning.

In the data of this period guilds occupy a more prominent place than in the preceding epochs. Perhaps this form of economic, and partly social, organisation had developed further. The Vasantagaḍh Inscription of Varmalātā of the year 625 A.D. (from modern Sirohi state) shows a *gosthī* or guild committee arranging for the construction of a temple.² On the occasion of the Princess Rājyaśrī's marriage, guilds of skilled workers—carpenters, painters, modellers, etc.—are summoned to decorate the palace. A reference is also

¹ Yuan Chwang, *Life*, 110–12. Watters, II, 164–65. For Nālanda assemblies, Beal, II, 170–71. For a view of Nālanda in the latter half of the 7th century A.D. I-tsing, tr. Takakusu, p. 177. For the remains of Nālanda buildings, J. B. O. R. S., 1923 (Vol. IX, Part I), pp. 1–22; also V. A. Smith, J. R. A. S., 1917, pp. 154–55. For a picture of life in Buddhist monasteries and their experiments in communism, I-tsing, *op. cit.*, Ch. XXXVII, pp. 193–94. There were also Brahmanical seats of learning (*Hargacarita*, 265, 266).

² *Ep. Ind.*, IX, No. 25.

made to Navasevakas or apprentices in guilds.¹ The theory of the status, constitution and working of guilds, as enunciated by Brihaspati, indicates that they were a recognised part of the body-politic. From Brihaspati as from Nārada it appears that a guild had a general assembly which met from time to time to transact business. There were two, three or five executive officers.² Yājñavalkya and Nārada lay down elaborate rules for the conduct and training of apprentices and their relations with the masters.³ On the technical side of their affairs, the guilds appear to be self-governing but, according to the theory of the Dharma Śāstras, the state should settle their internal wrangles, regulate and control their relations with the outside world and, in general, should see that they conformed to rules and usages. Yājñavalkya is perfectly clear on the point. All groups which have strayed from their own laws, whether they be families, guilds, associations, must be subjected to discipline and brought back to the path of duty by the king.⁴ In practice, the amount of state control must have varied with distance from the headquarters of government officials, the vigour of the government, the prestige of particular guilds and the character of their work. But it seems clear from the Dharma Śāstras that guilds acted as courts of justice in civil suits, though an appeal might lie from their decisions to the king.

¹ Harṣacarita, 158.

² Nārada, X, 3; Brihaspati, XVII, 11-19. Brihaspati prescribes qualifications of high birth, sterling character, learning and professional excellence for the officers of guilds.

³ Yājñavalkya, II, 187; Nārada, V, 16-21.

⁴ Yājñavalkya Samhitā, II, 186-192; I, 361. Nārada, X, 2-3, 5-6. Brihaspati, XVII, 5-17, 19-21. Cf. Manu, VIII, 5, 218-20. On other aspects of the life of guilds, also Brihaspati, I, 28, 30; XVII, 11-12.

A small amount of supplementary evidence on the politics of the 7th century A.D. can be gathered from a few literary works. To Harṣa himself has been attributed the authorship of three dramatic pieces—Nāgānanda, Ratnāvalī and Priyadarśikā. There is, however, nothing in them to show that they are the handiwork of an experienced statesman. They are cast in the usual mould and their political touches are far from refreshing. I-tsing, indeed, affirms that Nāgānanda had been dramatised by Harṣa but all that

Nāgānanda. can be asserted with certainty is that the play was composed in the 7th century A.D., probably at the emperor's court. It faithfully reflects contemporary political conditions when, in the very prologue, it refers to the Rājasamūha, the crowd of Rājas, who bowed to the feet of Harṣa. Obeisance of this character is held in the inscriptions also to symbolise the relationship of suzerainty and vassalage. One is reminded of Yuan Chwang's statement when, in the beginning of the fourth Act of Nāgānanda, the chamberlain speaks of the king as one who put everything in order in the cities and who rectified all wrongs by means of punishments according to Nīti. As in the dramatic works of preceding epochs, princes have their boon companions, Vidūṣakas, jesters.¹ In other acts of Nāgānanda there appears a superintendent of the harem, a chamberlain and other household officers.² On the basis of tradition as well as internal evidence,

Ratnāvalī. Ratnāvalī may be held to belong to the seventh century. In its fourth Act it brings a crowd of feudatories round the suzerain. The description of the royal camp corroborates Bānabhaṭṭa and Yuan Chwang.³

¹ Nāgānanda, Act I.

² Ibid., Acts II, IV, V.

³ Ratnāvalī (ed. Cappeller), Act IV.

Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's *Veṇi Saṁhāra* which belongs probably to the same century, is an interesting play but the plot which turns on an incident of the *Mahābhārata* reflects the temper of the epic. It treats of politics in terms of the family and the clan. It will be unsafe to draw from it any conclusions about the seventh century A.D.

The seventh century, so fertile in drama and Kāvya, witnessed the composition of some curious works. The *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, attributed without adequate reason to Bhartṛihari and belonging probably to this period, seeks to combine grammatical instruction and poetic diction with a narration of the tale of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. It upholds the orthodox Brahmanical order. But its political touches have nothing novel about them.

By the seventh century A.D., the connection of the North with the Deccan had become very close and many political institutions and designations had become common to both regions. The Mauryan, Āndhra, Kāliṅga and Gupta empires, in spite of their respect for autonomy, had served to intensify the centripetal forces. The village institutions of the North always differed from those of the Deccan and yet more markedly from those of the extreme south. There were also other points of difference but the fundamental political conditions, central, provincial and district institutions and fiscal arrangements were remarkably similar in the seventh century. Thus the Sarsavi Plates of Buddharāja of the year 609-10 A.D. (from modern Barodā territory) present the same type of feudatories—Rājas and Sāmantas—and the same type of administrative officers—*Mahāsamdhivigrahādhikaraṇādhikṛita*, *Mahābālādhikṛita*, *Bhogika*, *Viśayapati*, etc. Here *Ādhikārika* appears to denote government employees

in general. The fiscal system is the same as in the north.¹ Two grants of Dadda IV of the year 641-42 A.D. from Gujārāt introduce the title Bhogikapālaka, literally, protector of Bhogikas. It may refer to the central officer who dealt with the provincial rulers but its exact significance is not clear.² The Bagumra Grant of Nikumbhallaśakti of the year 654-55 A.D. from southern Gujārāt mentions Rājas or feudatories, Rājasthānīyas or viceroys, and other officers as in the north. It discloses an administrative division Rāṣṭra under a Rāṣṭrakūṭa. It is perhaps a revenue division. For the rest, the fiscal system is the same as in the north.³ The Sañjan Plates of the Western Cālukya Buddharasa from the modern district of Thānā mention the title Rājādhirāja Parameśvara which appears to be an alternative form of Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara. A cousin of the paramount sovereign is called Rājan which shows that members of the royal family held fiefs. There is mention of a "twelve village," that is, a district which comprised or was supposed to comprise twelve villages, a form of territorial distribution which appears very frequently in the later history of the Deccan.⁴ It is curious that some inscriptions of Pulakeśin II do not apply the grand titles to him. In the Chip-lun Copper Plate Grant, the king issues his command, *inter alia*, to all Sāmantas, Prithivīpālas and Rājas who are obviously feudatories. But the suzerain styles himself neither Mahārājādhirāja nor Parameśvara.⁵ The Yekkeri Rock Inscription boasts that Pulakeśin imposed his prowess on the entire number of chieftains and acquired the sovereignty over the whole earth. But he is only designated Mahārāja.⁶

¹ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 29.

² Ep. Ind., V, No. 5.

³ Ind. Ant., XVIII, 1889, pp. 265 et seq.

⁴ Ep. Ind., XIV, No. 8.

⁵ Ep. Ind., III, No. 8.

⁶ Ep. Ind., V, No. 2.

Yuan Chwang also remarks that Pulakesin, confident of his martial strength, treated the neighbouring countries with contempt.¹ It appears that the grand titles, while certainly in vogue in the Deccan, were not yet applied there with the uniformity which obtained in the north. Perhaps the titles originated in the North; it is in the northern Gupta Inscriptions that they are first met with in abundance. Thence they were adopted in the Deccan and it was not until some time that they became universal. The Yekkeri and Chiplun Inscriptions as well as the Aihole Inscription² present the usual officers, including Viṣayapatis, and the usual fiscal system. The Aihole Inscription also brings to view an hereditary army corps. In the Araṅ Plate of Bhtmasena II of the year 601 A.D. appears a line of hereditary Mahārājas.³ A grant of Raṇagraha of the year 640 A.D. shows a Bhogika acting as Dātaka.⁴ In the Nausari Plates of Sryasrava (671 A.D.) āhāra is the subdivision of a Viṣaya.⁵ In the Chandalur Plates of Sarvalokasraya (673 A.D.), appears a line of hereditary Mahārājas. Naiyogika, a term which does not seem to occur in the northern inscriptions, is the title applied to some officers. The Dātaka is called Ājñapti.⁶ The Navalakhi Plates of the year 605-6 A.D. from Jūnāgaḍh in Kāthiāwāḍ mention officers of northern designations—Āyuktakas, Vinīyuktakas, Kumārāmātyas, Dātakas, Cāṭas, Bhaṭas, etc. Here Divirapati seems to be a chief clerk, a sort of departmental secretary.⁷ It was during this period that a great feudatory title, Pañcamahāśabda, came into vogue in the south. It is rarely met with in the north

¹ Watters, II, 239.

² Ep. Ind., VI, No. 1.

³ Ep. Ind., IX, No. 53.

⁴ Ep. Ind., II, No. 4.

⁵ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 22.

⁶ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 24.

⁷ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 17.

but in the succeeding centuries it is fairly common in the Deccan. It is almost always applied to feudatories. It signifies that its holder was entitled to the use of five great sounds—musical instruments. Fleet points out that according to the Liṅgāyata Vivekacintāmaṇi these sounds refer to Śrīṅga or horn, Tammata or tambour, Śaṅkha or conch-shell, Bheri or kettle-drum and Jayaghaṇṭā or gong.¹ The privilege of using these instruments in courts or processions seems to have been conferred by the suzerain on big feudatories who won high favour at his hands, though, like all titles in ancient India, it tended to become hereditary.

¹ Ind. Ant., XII. p. 95. Also Epigraphia Carnatica, VIII, 168.

CHAPTER XIV.

From the Eighth to the Tenth Century A.D.

Neither Bāṇabhaṭṭa nor Yuan Chwang nor any of the contemporary inscriptions refers to any wife of Harṣavardhana, or to the fact of his marriage. It is certain that he died childless. When it is remembered that his sister Rājyaśrī is often mentioned, one is inclined to think that the emperor was a celibate all his life. If so, it is interesting to notice that while big seraglios were the rule in aristocratic circles in ancient India, there were occasional exceptions. On the death of Harṣa about 648 A.D. his empire split up into the fragments which had only loosely held together for a few decades. The throne at Kanauj was usurped by a minister of the late king.¹ It is a proof of the great power wielded by ministers that several Hindu empires—the Mauryan, Śuṅga, Kāṇva and Vardhana—ended with ministerial usurpations. From the latter half of the 7th to the 11th century A.D. the history of North India loses unity and clarity. Thanks to Kalhana's Rājatarāṅgiṇī, a connected account of the history of Kāśhmīr can be constructed. But of the rest of the country only fragmentary glimpses can be obtained through coins, inscriptions, and literature. Towards the ninth century the Gūjjara-Pratihāra ascendancy certainly recalled the glories of Harṣavardhana but it was

¹ For a different view S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, *Journal of Indian History*, December, 1926, pp. 313-15.

short-lived. Besides, the Gûrjara-Pratihâra dominion was held together even more loosely than the Gupta or Vardhana empire. On the whole, then, it may be laid down that the four centuries preceding the Muslim invasions under Mahmûd of Ghaznî were a period of small and, historically, obscure states. The political facts about them, so far as modern research has been able to recover them, are well summarised in the fourth edition of Vincent A. Smith's *Early History of India* (pp. 366-438), and in a few recent papers notably those of D. R. Bhandarkar and R. C. Majumdar. It is needless to recapitulate them here. All that need be stated is that during the period, the chief states in the north were Kanauj, Kâshmir, Sindh, Magadha, Kaliṅga or Orissâ, Bengal, Kâmarûpa or Âssâm, Mâlwa and later, Ajmere, Delhi, Gwalior, Jejâkabhukti and Chedi. Besides them and generally below them lay a huge congeries of petty principalities.

As the subsequent analysis of the epigraphic and literary data will demonstrate, the political constitution and

Similarity of
Administrative
Structure.

administrative structure of these different states were fundamentally similar. Everywhere one meets with the same feudal conditions of suzerainty and vassalage, nearly the same high officers with similar designations, the same fiscal and judicial system and, though not to the same extent, a similar attitude on the part of the state towards the people. Everywhere one meets with the same despotism—often benevolent but sometimes terrible and tyrannical. Everywhere is the same system of village administration—partly informal self-government and partly government and supervision from the district, provincial or central headquarters. This striking similarity is to be attributed to three causes. In the first place the northern plains were governed by the same geographical, economic and social conditions and therefore tended to evolve the same type of polity. In the second place, the human tendency to

imitation would conduce to the reproduction of the institutions of one region in others. The multiplicity of states meant a large field for political experimentation. The limits of the experiment, its terms of reference, so to say, were narrow, but within its range it would result in the growth of diverse institutions. Their success and failure would be naturally observed and the more successful ones might be adopted elsewhere. In the third place, the rise of big empires from time to time would assist the process of assimilation. The example of the suzerain would be followed by the vassals and the resulting uniformity of institutions would, in a large measure, survive the break-up of the empire. From the broad administrative point of view North India shows a unity which, from the strict political standpoint, is conspicuous by its absence. Another general conclusion which emerges from the data of this period is that the institutions show little development. The number of officers in a given region may be larger or smaller at one time than in other periods. The number, size and sphere of administrative departments might similarly vary. But there is no change of first-rate importance, no organic evolution, in the institutions of this epoch. When one has arranged all relevant inscriptions and literary documents in the chronological as well as regional order, and compared their data, one fails to detect any marked changes or developments. Monotony and stagnation seem to characterise the politics of these four centuries. This was, perhaps, only part of a general phenomenon. For instance, the literature of this period is wanting in originality, depth and movement. The Purāṇas or Upa-Purāṇas which had been fashioned in earlier epochs were perhaps added to but merely on the old lines. The Smritis which were composed during this period slavishly echo the earlier Dharma Śāstras for the most part. Where they attempt something on their

own account, they fail miserably. The classical literature is not immune from this deadening tendency. The Kāvya is now bound hand and foot by artificial rules and has perforce to follow a prescribed model. Instead of inspiration and spontaneity, it only shows ingenuity and jugglery of words.¹ The drama which displayed such virility in the days of Bhāsa and which had reached its high-water mark in the Gupta age is now governed by mechanical rules. The Pañcasandhis replace natural movement.² A good deal of the literary talent of the period is spent on fashioning these rules of prosody, dramaturgy, etc., in classifying the subject-matter and reducing it to division and sub-division until life is replaced by machine. Other writers exhaust themselves in writing commentaries on old philosophic works, grammarians, the epics, Dharma Sūtras, Dharma Śāstras, Purāṇas and classical pieces. The time came when even commentaries were furnished with a code and composed almost mechanically. Such were the general conditions under which government was carried on in North India from the eighth century onwards. For administration it is perhaps best to begin with literature and eke out the little which it has to offer.

About 700 A.D. Bhavabhūti enriched Sanskrit literature by three remarkable plays—the Mālatimādhava, the Mahāvīracarita and, above all, the Uttara Bhavabhūti. Rāmācarita.³ The last two considerably

¹ Dandin's Kāvyaadarśa is probably the first of its kind (Keith, Classical Sanskrit Literature, p. 131). The crop becomes plentiful later on.

² See the rules laid down by Bharata, Dhanañjaya, Viśvanātha and Jñānabhūpāla. The Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra is probably anterior to Bhāsa and Kālidāsa (Keith, Classical Sanskrit Literature, p. 129; on the whole subject, Keith, Sanskrit Drama, pp. 290 et seq.) but the domination of rules increases with the lapse of time.

³ On the date, style, etc., of Bhavabhūti, see Keith, Sanskrit Drama, pp. 186–204. Macdonell, Sanskrit Literature, 362–65. R. G. Bhandarkar's Preface to his edition of the Mālatimādhava, Bombay Sanskrit Series, No. XV. Also the introductions by various scholars to the editions and translations of his works, particularly that by S. K. Belvalkar, Harvard Oriental Series, No. 21.

modify the story of the Rāmāyaṇa in their plots. The Uttara-carita is a severe indictment of Rāma's action in exiling his faithful wife, Sītā, to calm irrational rumours, but it admits that a king must pay high regard to popular sentiment and conciliate it at any cost. In the play spies move among the people to detect all shades of feeling and report them to the king who receives them personally. The brothers of a king are associated with him in the task of administration. No great royal sacrifice or ceremony can be complete without the presence of the queen. For the rest, Bhavabhūti, a Brāhmaṇa of the Taittirīya school of the Yajurveda, is an upholder of the orthodox Brahmanical order. In a scene which is hardly necessary to the main plot, King Rāma is thrown into consternation when he is told that a Śūdra was, contrary to Śāstric injunctions, practising penances and that this violation of Dharma was bringing ruin and death to some righteous folk. Rāma hurriedly takes up the bow, rushes to the scene and slays the Śūdra. The accessibility of the king is one of the remarkable features in Bhavabhūti's plays.

About the eighth century also comes Māgha, author of the frightfully artificial Śiśupālabadha, one of the five Mahākāvya of Sanskrit literature. The

Māgha. plot turns on Kṛṣṇa's killing of his perverse foolhardy relative, Śiśupāla, but the poet, when not enchained to the epic, is subservient to Bhāravi. It is on the Kirātārjunīya that the political passages of the Śiśupālabadha are modelled. Māgha frankly disregards principles in politics. The government should be popular but, above all, efficient, firm and relentless. High ambition and self-interest, adroitly and unflinchingly pursued, swift, decisive action will make the king shine like the sun in the Maṇḍala of twelve kings.¹ The persistence of this school of real

¹ Māgha, Canto II, particularly Ślokaś 26, 29, 30, 65, 81.

politics from the days of the Mahābhārata onwards indicates that it always had some relation to facts. Machiavelli, said Acton, is "a constant influence" in Europe. His counterparts in ancient India were likewise a permanent phenomenon.

The fact is well illustrated by Viśākhadatta's political drama, the *Mudrārākṣasa* which belongs to the eighth or ninth century A.D.¹ The play perhaps follows an older tradition and it is not easy to decide how far it is representative of the age in which it was actually composed. None the less, the series of adroit manoeuvres in which Cāṇakya plays a leading part and which culminate in the replacement of the Nanda by the Mauryan dynasty on the throne of Pāṭaliputra are of fascinating interest. Cāṇakya addresses Candragupta as a Vriṣala (Śūdra). Rākṣasa, the chief minister of the Nanda king, addresses the goddess of royal power in a soliloquy and asks "was there no chief noble of blood to win thy fickle smiles, that thou must elevate a base-born outcast to imperial sway?" (Act II). In the play the monarch finds his position a source of great uneasiness. It is difficult for him to attend to his own interests as well as to those of others. On the other hand, he runs a fatal risk if he entrusts too much power to his minister. Fortune makes kings her sport. When both the king and the ministers are very powerful, the goddess of royalty deserts one of them. Sovereignty, so to say, is indivisible. If a king relies too much on his ministers, he will, on separation

¹ Charpentier placed Viśākhadatta in the age of Kālidāsa, but Jacobi on astronomical evidence brings him down to the latter half of the ninth century A.D. See Keith, J. R. A. S., 1909, p. 145. See also Rapson, J. R. A. S., 1900, p. 535; Tawney, J. R. A. S., 1908, p. 910; Konow, Ind. Ant., 1914, p. 68, also Ind. Ant., 1913, pp. 235-67. Jayaswal places the *Mudrārākṣasa* in the time of Candragupta II. Antani (Ind. Ant., LI, p. 49) refutes Jayaswal.

from the latter, feel like a helpless babe. Or the minister may unconsciously usurp too much power. In the play, the king chafes under the control of Cāṇakya. In high affairs of state, secret intrigue sometimes played an important, even decisive part. Espionage is there as an integral part of the machinery of government.¹ In the first Act avaricious Nandas are contrasted with Candragupta who "esteems your happiness his wealth." The third Act emphasises that the king must forego his personal comfort for the sake of the general good.

Harihara's *Bhartriharinirveda*, in Sanskrit and Prākṛit, brings in the fourth Act, a king listening quietly and attentively to an ascetic's instruction. Rājase-

Minor pieces.

khara who flourished about 900 A.D. at the court of Mahendrapāla and his successor at Kanauj, wrote four plays: (1) *Karpūramañjarī*, (2) *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, (3) *Pracaṇḍapaṇḍava*, and (4) *Viddhalaśālabhañjikā*. In the last both the minister Bhāgurāyaṇa and the buffoon Cārāyaṇa are Brāhmaṇas.

The Jaina literature of this period, though extensive and magnificent, is from the administrative view-point only of secondary importance. It tells us little

The Jaina Ādi Purāṇa.

that is absolutely new but it confirms, in a most striking manner, the conclusions to which other evidence leads. By far the most important Jaina work of this period is the *Ādi Purāṇa*, composed by Jinasenācārya and, after his death, continued by Guṇabhadra-cārya, in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D.² It embodies

¹ *Mudrārākṣasa* (ed. H. R. Kale), particularly Act III, pp. 39, 47, 63.

² Mss. of the *Ādi Purāṇa* are preserved in numerous Jaina temples in India. It has been published in the *Syādvāda Granthamālā Series*, No. 4. For the author, see the *Ādi Purāṇa*, *Prastāvanā*, 55-58, *Uttara Purāṇa*, *Prastāsti*, particularly 11-12. The *Hindī Jñānaprabodha*, 9-17, is unreliable but see Bakhat Rāma's *Buddhivilāsa*. The *Vardhamāna Purāṇa* and *Jinendraguṇastuti*, believed to have been written by Jinasena, have not yet been recovered.

a good deal of older tradition. Its conception of government is paternal and patriarchal.¹ When it seeks to demolish the claims of ordinary Brâhmanas and in their place to invest Jaina Brâhmanas with all the privileges of reverence, stipends, exemption from taxes and severe punishments, it shows that the Brâhmanas did really enjoy some privileges. Jaina kings should not accept any blessings from the ordinary Brâhmanas.²

But the coronation of Rîṣabha, the first of the twenty-four Tirthakaras, in the 16th canto, is conducted in Brahmanic style. The account is also useful for other

details which are probably true to facts.

Consecration. Water was brought from the Ganges, Sindhu (Indus) and other rivers (sacred only in the belief of Brâhmanas), for the consecration. The various holy waters, mixed with camphor, sandal, etc., and again with the essence of many kinds of flowers, were poured on Rîṣabha by "kings," that is, feudatories, among others. Jewels and many other precious articles were showered on him. His father Nâbhi took the crown off his head and, with his own hands, placed it on that of Rîṣabha, saying, 'Rîṣabha is the protector of all the crowned heads, not I.'³ On this auspicious occasion, the capital Ayodhyâ was astir with song and music and dance.⁴ Later, at the close of his own reign, Rîṣabha installed his son Bharata as king and another prince Bâhubali as Yuvarâja.⁵ On a yet later occasion in the narration of the Âdi Purâṇa, another

¹ Âdi Purâṇa, Parvan XVI, 271-75. For the Jaina conception of the Golden Age, the fall from it, the emergence of 'civilisation,' the creation of society and the state, etc., Ibid., III, XV, 130-190, 241-45, 255-57, 250-52.

For political reflections, LXXV, 105-15, 214-20 in particular.

² Ibid., XVI, 241-46; XXXIX, 13-14, 20-22, 108-24, 127-142, 154-57; XL, 40, 63, 67, 139, 192-93; XLI, 45-55; XLII, 181-92.

³ Ibid., XVI, 211, 225-32.

⁴ Ibid., XVI, 197-208.

⁵ Ibid., XVII, 76-77.

consecration is performed in a similar style, at first by many great Rājas, then by inmates of the seraglio, by priests and by citizens.¹ Besides Nābhi and Rīṣabha there are other kings or feudatories in the Ādi Purāṇa who renounced the world on the approach of age or even earlier and anointed their sons in their places. Religion could exercise this sort of influence even on those who had no decidedly spiritual turn of mind. For instance, Jayakumāra once entrusted the government to his younger brother, Vijayakumāra, and went to various places for enjoyment.² Later, he formally anointed his son and renounced the world.³ King Atibala suddenly realised that worldly dominion was contemptible and soul-killing and promptly renounced his country, family and all else.⁴ Other legends of the Ādi Purāṇa, however, show that kings, so long as they occupied the throne, generally lived a life of luxury and enjoyment. Lalitāṅgadeva, for instance, is said to have had four chief queens and four thousand other wives and to have spent countless years in enjoyment.⁵

The institutions of government in the Ādi Purāṇa are the same as in other literature and in the inscriptions.

King Mahābala, a legendary figure, had

Institutions. four ministers and held counsel with all of them, or three, two or one of them.⁶ On finance and local government the Jaina work follows the Brahmanical Dharma Śāstras. It idealises universal conquest in spite of the Jaina emphasis on non-violence as the essence of religion.⁷

¹ Ibid., XXXVII, 2-3, 11, 13-14.

² Ibid., XLIII, 256.

³ Ibid., XLIII, 276-78.

⁴ Ibid., IV, 141-56. Cf. Uttara Purāṇa, XLVIII, 9-10, 26-27, 32-33, 90-91; LXVII, 14-17; LIV, 80-82.

⁵ Ibid., V, 285-97.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 190-96.

⁷ Ibid., IV, 106-98; XVI, 254; XXV-XXVI.

The account of Rīṣabha, the first of the twenty-four Jaina Tirthakaras and his son Bharata, the first of the Cakravartins, shows that the small state was the rule but the tendency to expansion brought about an extensive relationship of suzerain and vassal. Feudalism, in fact, is rampant in the Ādi Purāṇa. Not only is the consecration of the suzerain performed primarily by feudatories, but the latter are expected to give him valuable presents on the occasion of his birth-day which, by the way, is celebrated with great festivities.¹ Rīṣabha is spoken of as seated on the throne, surrounded by hundreds of Rājas.² When he renounces the world, his example is followed by 360 "kings" who, later, fall from the truth.³ The Digvijaya of Bharata follows the usual course and is said to result in the acknowledgment of his suzerainty all round.⁴ A svayanivara is attended by numerous 'kings,' who, after it is over, indulge in a free fight.⁵ The facts of feudalism are brought out still more clearly in the Uttara Purāṇa as the continuation of Guṇabhadra-cārya, in its relation to the whole as the Mahāpurāṇa, is called. It gives sketches of the twenty-three Tirthakaras who followed Rīṣabha at long intervals of time, of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa (who are painted as Jaina worthies), Śreṇika, Jivandhara and numerous other Jaina heroes. Most of the personages were born in royal families and some of them wielded political power. Throughout the pages of the Uttarapurāṇa, feudatories abound. In hundreds they appear as the satellites of the suzerains.

The same conclusion about feudatories emerges from the Jaina Padma Purāṇa and Harivaṃśa Purāṇa. In the latter, for instance, king Śreṇika's example in filling Bihār with Jaina temples is said to have been followed by his

¹ Ibid., XVII, 1.

² Ibid., XVII, 1.

³ Ibid., XVII, 216.

⁴ Ibid., XXVI, 58 et seq.; XXVI.

⁵ Ibid., XXXIX, 230 et seq.; XL.

Sāmantas, ministers and subjects in general.¹ Here Sāmanta can have only one meaning, that of feudatory. Here one of the aspects of the relations between suzerain and vassal is that of giving the lead and following the lead.

Sudharmasvāmigaṇabhṛitha's Śrīpraśnavyākaraṇāṅgam² has some excellent incidental political touches. The

Sudharmasvāmigaṇabhṛitha term Māṇḍalika here means a feudatory, a normal feature of the body-politic.

Kings are often spoken of as accompanied by them as well as by priests, ministers and commanders. Kings and military commanders sometimes fought among themselves and oppressed the people.³ Only too often did royal servants misuse their trust. Sudharmasvāmigaṇabhṛitha speaks of them as a species of thieves.⁴ Military officers are called rogues⁵ and equally severe epithets are applied to police-officers and revenue officers.⁶

Candraprabha Sūri's Prabhāvakacarita⁷ also brings out a condition of federal-feudalism. The Anuyogadvā-

Other Jaina rasūtram inculcates loyalty to government as part of the general resignation which is its philosophy, as that of so many other Jaina tracts. In the Gadya Cintāmaṇi written by Vādibhasiṃhasūri⁸ in the style of Bāṇabhaṭṭa about

¹ (Jaina) Harivaṃśa Purāṇa (Gāndhī Haribhaṭ Devakaraṇa Jaina Granthamālā No. 2), I, pp. 148-49. See Canto II for royal pomp and splendour. For an instance of stern justice, see Uttara Purāṇa, LXVII, 96-111, where a king, in spite of the protests of ministers, sentences a defaulting prince to death and remarks that a king should cut off the right hand if it offends.

² Published with a commentary by Abhayadevasūri, Nirṇaya-sāgara Press, Bombay, 1919.

³ Śrīpraśnavyākaraṇāṅgam, III, 11.

⁴ Ibid., III, 12.

⁵ Ibid., III, 11.

⁶ Ibid., I, 7.

⁷ Ed. H. P. Śāstri, Bombay, 1909.

⁸ Ed. T. S. K. Śāstri, and S. S. Śāstri, Tanjore.

the eighth century A.D., King Satyabhadra practically transfers the administration to a scheming minister who usurps the throne. But a posthumous prince recovers his patrimony and shines forth as an ideal ruler. In his *Kṣatracūḍāmaṇi*¹ the same author speaks of kings as the life of living beings,² and condemns disloyalty as a great sin.³ There is an interesting anecdote that a king, convinced of the futility of worldly grandeur, embraced asceticism to the great grief of Pauras and Jānapadas,⁴ city-folk and country-folk. This seems to have been a convenient division of the people from the political point of view.

There are a few other Jaina works of this period which incidentally touch on politics. Haribhadra's *Dharmavindu* for instance, which belongs to the ninth century A.D., inculcates loyalty and respect to the sovereign⁵ but, on the whole, these works do not reflect the working of institutions and must be passed over. In the tenth century A.D. Somadevasūri composed a

remarkable work, *Nītivākyāṃṛitam*, 'nectar of political sayings' in *Sūtra* form. It lacks originality of matter. The author cries 'back to Kauṭalya' and frequently draws also on the *Mahābhārata*, *Vaśiṣṭha*, *Manu* and others. But the dexterity with which he leaves out some of their ideas and weaves the rest into a fine harmonious whole is in itself an index to the political temper of his age. The work was composed under the patronage of a big feudatory but it treats of politics in the usual style. It shows that the governmental machinery of a feudatory state approximated to the usual type. Knowledge is the prime requisite

¹ Ed. T. S. K. Śāstrī, Tanjore.

² *Kṣatracūḍāmaṇi*, Lamba, I, 46.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 69-70.

⁵ *Dharmavindu*, I, 31.

in public affairs. A perverse ignorant prince should never be installed as heir-apparent.¹ Somadeva wants the king to promote agriculture, to control trade, fix the prices and supervise the markets. In reality there are no greater thieves on earth than tradesmen. Ministers should be well-born Brâhmanas, Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas, but never foreigners. Somadeva puts their number at three, five or seven.² Evidently he is thinking of very small states or feudatory domains. The duty of administering impartial justice is extolled in the highest terms and the policy imposing heavy fines from financial motives is condemned. Another possible reference to contemporary politics is implied in the precept that military officers should not be consulted in the determination of policy. They are only too ready to clutch at war. Strife is the law of their being. Besides, if they are placed in control of civil policy, they may grow dangerously proud and powerful.³ None the less, the commander-in-chief was one of the most important of officers.⁴ The ambassador was another notable functionary. A definite code of diplomatic etiquette had been evolved. An envoy might talk as he liked but his life was sacrosanct. On no account was he to be molested.⁵ Needless to say, the Purohita was another great personage, who should be instrumental in warding off natural or supernatural calamities.⁶

On espionage Somadeva seems to reflect the facts of his times all over India. Broadly speaking, secret agents fell into two classes, those who busied themselves

¹ Somadeva *Sûri, Nītivākyaṃṛitam*, 56-57. For the prince's education, 60-61.

² *Ibid.*, 62-66, 76-80, 84-90, 93-95, 98-100, 102-104, 106-125, 127-35.

³ *Ibid.*, 136-37.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 170-71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 160-63.

with discovering the misdeeds of officials and the feelings of subjects and those who sought to probe the intentions and plans of neighbouring rulers. In either case they were to disguise themselves as ascetics and scholars, mathematicians and astrologers, physicians and soldiers, tradesmen and artisans, singers and dancers, foresters and snakecharmers, sorcerers and jugglers, and so forth. They must be paid adequately.¹ Another realistic touch is furnished when the author, in spite of his Jaina persuasion, lays down that in law-courts a Brâhmaṇa should take the oath by touching his sacred thread or a piece of gold; a Kṣatriya, by touching a weapon, a jewel or the ground, etc., a Vaiśya by touching his ear or gold, a Śūdra by touching milk or corn. The idea, we are told, is that the form of oath should have some correspondence with the occupation of the person concerned.² There are many other political maxims in the *Nītivākyāmr̥tam* but they are too theoretical.³

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Another of Somadeva's works, the *Yasastilakacampū*, has some political touches, particularly in its third *Aśvāsa*. But they add nothing to the data available from the *Nītivākyāmr̥tam*.

In the eighth century A.D. India felt the impact of the rising power of Islām for the first time. The Arabs

¹ *Ibid.*, 172-74.

² *Ibid.*, 305.

³ On political deliberation, *ibid.*, 175-76; other qualities in kings and ministers, 177-84, 246-50; on officers, 185-190; on the treasury, 202-206; on the territory, 190-97; on forts, 198-201; on the army, 209-15; on diplomacy and foreign policy, 243-72; on allies, 216-20; on courtiers, 295-305; on taxes, 271. Haribala's commentary on the *Nītivākyāmr̥tam* frequently illustrates Somadeva's meaning by parallel quotations from the *Ārthasāstra*, various *Dharma Śāstras* and *Jaimini*, the great master of the rules of interpretation, but it is valueless for administrative practice.

conquered Sindh in 712 A.D. about the same time that
 Sindh. their arms were crowned with victory
 in the far distant Spain. The Arab

writers give a full account of the expeditions of the young hero Muhammad-bin-Qâsim and, incidentally, throw some light on the political condition of Sindh and the neighbouring regions. They are not accurate in all their details but in fundamentals they corroborate the conclusions which are reached on the basis of indigenous evidence. The dominant fact which emerges from the Arab accounts is that a feudalised confederation was the type of Hindu polity. The merchant Sulaimân's *Salsilatu-t Tawârikh*, written in the middle of the ninth century and added to by Abû Zaidul Hasan of Sirâf in the following century, has it that the Balharâ was the most eminent of the princes of India, that all Indians acknowledged his superiority, that while every prince in India was master in his own state, all paid homage to the supremacy of the Balharâ. The latter's representatives were everywhere received with the profoundest respect. A few pages later, the Arab writer slightly modifies his statement and says that the princes of India did not recognise the supremacy of any one sovereign, each one was his own master, still the Balharâ had the title 'king of kings.'¹ Ibn Khurdabâ's *Kitâb-l Masâlik Wa-l Mamâlik*, composed towards the close of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century A.D. also calls the Balharâ king of kings.² In the tenth century two other writers, Al Masûdî, author of *Murûjul Zahab* and Al Idrisi, author of *Nuzhatu-l Mushtak* also speak of Balharâ as king of kings and the greatest king in India.³ Who this Balharâ was is not an easy question to

¹ Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. I, pp. 1, 6-7.

² *Ibid.*, 13.

³ *Ibid.*, 21, 75.

answer. Probably he represented the dynasty at Ballabhipura but the difficulty of the identification does not affect the conclusion that India, so far as known to the Arabs, was split up into a large number of principalities which faintly recognised the suzerainty of an overlord. Another statement of the merchant Sulaimân confirms this view. "When a king subdues a neighbouring state, he places over it a man belonging to the family of the fallen prince, who carries on the government in the name of the conqueror. The inhabitants would not suffer it to be otherwise."¹ This feature of "conquest" which is also well brought out in Hindu literature and epigraphy, would serve to accentuate the federal-feudal character of Hindu political organisation. An idea of the usual size of a Hindu state is given by the *Ohach Nâmâ* or *Târikh-i-Hind wa Sind*, which, though composed in the 13th century, is based on older, authentic documents which go back to the eighth century A.D. There were no less than seventy chiefs ruling in Sindh.² The lines of some of these feudatories survived for long, bearing to the new Muslim power the relation in which they had stood to the Hindu suzerain. About the beginning of the 17th century A.D., the chronicler Mir Muhammad Mâsûm of Bhakkar, author of the *Târikh-u-Sind*, applied the term *zaimindâr* to all such feudatories.³ That expression today only means a landholder, but the sense in which the Muslim historians from the 13th to the 17th century A.D. used it to denote the nearly independent or semi-independent Hindu chieftains of the deserts, mountains, Râjpûtânâ, and Central India conveys the idea of the usual relationship of suzerain and vassal in Ancient India.

¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

² *Ibid.*, 211.

³ *Ibid.*, 212.

The sceptre of the suzerain or of the feudatory descended from father to son in the same family. According to Masûdi, the rule was never broken. The Arab writer, however, seems to be wrong when he states that none could ascend the throne until he was forty years of age or that the king never appeared in public except at rare intervals for the inspection of public affairs. But a king who grossly misconducted himself might pay the penalty of his sins. One such ruler, a hopeless drunkard, forfeited the crown. But it seems to have been bestowed on another member of the family.¹ There were, of course, occasional cases of usurpation. For instance, Chach, who occupied the post of chamberlain, usurped the throne on the death of his master.² So strong was the sentiment in favour of hereditary succession that the chief offices of state—those of ministers, judges—were practically confined to the same families.³ The use of the Arabic word *Qâzi* to denote judges is interesting. It shows that the Hindu judges bore some resemblance to the well-known Muslim officers of the western Muslim countries.

In Sindh the highest office was that of High Chamberlain. According to the *Chach-nâmâ*, this officer exercised authority over the whole kingdom, and made all appointments and dismissals.⁴ The king's territory was divided into four provinces, each under a governor.⁵ Alor, the central capital of Sindh, was a large city adorned with all kinds of palaces and villas, gardens and groves, reservoirs and streams, parterres and flowers.⁶ The Hindu state had to keep itself constantly in readiness for war. The soldiers were paid regularly.⁷

¹ Ibid., 20.

² Ibid., *Chach-nâmâ*, p. 140.

³ Ibid., 20.

⁴ Ibid., 139, 140.

⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁶ Ibid., 138.

⁷ Ibid., 138-39.

An instance of influence of the state on social life is recorded. When Chach acquired some tracts in Sindh, he is said to have made the Jāṭas and Lohānas undertake to wear only mockswords, to forswear saddles, to keep their heads and feet uncovered, and to adopt certain occupations like those of carrying fuel and providing guides.¹

The Arab occupation of Sindh was a mere episode. Muslim rule soon disappeared and for the next four centuries Sindh relapsed into the old political conditions.

The administration of the rest of the northern plains has to be gathered from inscriptions. In the eighth and

later centuries the centripetal forces are
Feudalism. even weaker than in the former inter-

regnums. Feudalism was now more rampant than ever. The title Rāja could be assumed by, or could be bestowed upon, men whose rule was confined to a single village. In the disintegration of the times we can watch the rise of such small feudatories step by step. Udayamāna's lengthy rock inscription at Dudhpani in Magadha, of the eighth century A.D., records that three brothers, Udayamāna, Śrīdhautamāna and Ajitamāna, merchants by profession, on their way back from Tāmalipti in Bengal to Ayodhyā, after a gloriously successful mercantile adventure, happened to tarry at Bhramaraśālmali in Magadha. The ruler Ādisiṃha chanced to appear in the forest near by on a hunting trip and demanded an avaloga or avalogan—some sort of supplies or presents—from the villagers. The latter betook themselves to Udayamāna and entreated him to do the king's behest on their behalf. Udayamāna, overflowing with riches, readily complied and found himself a favourite with the king and a recipient of a Śrīpaṭṭa or diadem from royal hands. At his request the ruler sent an assurance to the

¹ Ibid., 145 et seq.

villagers of Bhramarasālmali of his good will towards them. On his return to the village, the benevolent merchant received an affectionate welcome. The grateful people requested him to be their Rāja. The ruler approved of the proposal. And so Udayamāna began his rule over the village. He managed to have his brothers Śrīdhautamāna and Ajitamāna appointed Rājas of the neighbouring villages, Nabhūtiṣaṇḍaka and Chingatā.¹

In this inscription Ādisimha is only called Magadhādhirāja. The absence of any of the three grand titles—Parameśvara, Mahārājādhirāja, Paramabhaṭṭāraka—which were universally employed by independent kings from the Gupta period onwards, shows that Ādisimha himself was only a feudatory. Nor does his name appear in any other inscription as that of a suzerain. So there is the interesting spectacle of feudatory Adhirājas creating sub-feudatory Rājas.

The emergence of suzerainty like that of vassalage can also be studied in the inscriptions. The Khalimpur Plate of

An instance of
the emergence of
suzerainty.

Dharmapāladeva records that Gopāla was induced by the people to assume the sovereignty in order to put an end to lawlessness and disorder. The grant employs the term Mātsya-Nyāya—the Logic of the Fish—the classical Sanskrit expression for anarchy. So he founded the Pāla dynasty of sovereigns about 730–740 A.D. He married Daddādevī, daughter of a king of Bhadra, and thus assimilated his line to the bluest blood of the country.² Here, then, we can observe how the general popular support would enable a dynasty to rise to supremacy. As in the earlier centuries, the rise to independence was always signalised by the assumption of the grand titles. Thus

¹ Ep. Ind., II, No. 27.

² Khalimpur Grant in Ep. Ind., Vol. IV, No. 34. For Bhadra, Ind. Ant., XXI, p. 258.

the Alina Copper Plate Inscription of Śīlāditya VII of the year 766-67 A.D. designates Dharasena IV, as Paramabhāṭṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja, Parameśvara, and Cakravartin and applies the same titles to his successors but his predecessors are not designated in the same style. The inscription describes powerful princes as bowing before the suzerain.¹

The rise from vassalage to independence or suzerainty is also indicated in some other epigraphic records of this period. The Daulatpura Plate of Bhojadeva I of Mahodaya, in the modern state of Jodhpur, dated Harṣa saṁvat 100, that is about 706 A.D., speaks of the grantee and his predecessors as Mahārājas.² On the other hand, the Peheṇā (Pchoa) Inscriptions of Harṣa saṁvat 276, that is, about 882 A.D., speaks of the same monarchs as Mahārājādhirājas.³ It seems that sometime during the interval of 176 years, the dynasty asserted its independence, and contrary to the usual practice, all its previous members were given the grand titles.

Most of the rulers of this period are Rājapūts who, according to modern research, had much foreign blood in their veins and who, as an age-long tradition indicates, had been consecrated to Kṣatriyaship. Even non-Kṣatriya kingship was known during this period. Commenting on Manu, VII, 1, 2; VIII, 40, the orthodox Medhātithi, who lived in the 10th century A.D., admitted the validity of non-Kṣatriya kingship. Later about the 14th century, Vijñāneśvara, who commented on Yājñavalkya in the Mitākṣarā, one of the most influential of all legal commentaries, agreed with Medhātithi.

¹ Fleet, Gupta Inscriptions, No. 89.

² Ep. Ind., V, No. 24.

³ Kielhorn's List No. 546.

The inscriptions convey a fair idea of administrative structure when they enumerate the personages to whom

the royal command is addressed. In the
 Administrative machinery. Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapāladeva,
 Magadha. Rājans and Rājānakas head the list. The

former is undoubtedly a feudal designation. It shows that feudatories were required to respect the suzerain's commands and arrangements. It can also mean that the feudatories were employed in high office in the suzerain's direct administration. The term Rājānaka signified minister in Kashmir and Chambā. But the context of the Khalimpur Inscription indicates that some feudatories are meant. Perhaps they represent a grade definitely lower than that of Rājans but the point is not free from doubt. The grant in question is made at the request of Nārāyaṇavarman, the Mahā-sāmantādhipati—great chief of Sāmantas, that is, feudatories. It is probable that the greatest and most notable of the feudatories was given this title. The term Rājaputra which follows shows that princes, whether of the suzerain or of the feudal houses, were often employed in high administrative posts. Next, the Rājāmātyas mean, as usual, the ministers of the king, probably only the highest ministers. The Dūtaka is not mentioned with other officers but he is evidently an officer of the highest importance. In the present inscription, the Yuvarāja himself seems to hold that position. The Senāpatis or commanders of armies stand next in order. Besides them there are a large number of officers. The Dauḥśādhasādhanikas and Cauroddharanikas are obviously police-officers. The Daṇḍaśaktis and Daṇḍapāśikas may be police-officers but it is more probable that they are judicial officers who are invested with the "power of punishment." The Śaulkikas and Gaulmikas were, as in the preceding epochs, concerned with the supervision of tolls and of forests. The Dūtas,

Gamāgamikas¹ and Abhitvarmāṇas are the various classes of messengers. The mention of Kholas between Dūtas and Gamāgamikas indicates that the Kholas were also a class of messengers. The use of four, or at least, three different terms points to a gradation. In any case the frequent mention of messengers with responsible officers is an index of their importance and position. In a far-flung empire their function was necessarily one of great importance. To the central as to the subordinate offices were attached a number of secretaries or clerks, who, again, seem to be divided into grades. Kāyastha was the general term applied to them. Jyesthakāyasthas or chief writers are specially mentioned in the Khalimpur grant. Among fiscal officers, besides the Śaulkika is mentioned the Śaṣṭādhikṛita, the superintendent or controller of the Śaṣṭhāṇṣa or Śaḍbhāga, the traditional royal sixth of the land produce. The Tarikas were probably overseers of the ferries and collected the ferry tolls. There are a number of military officers, inspectors of the elephants, horse and other troops. Along with them are mentioned inspectors of boats, of cows, buffaloes, goats and sheep. The possibility of these inspectors being civil officers cannot be excluded but from the context and order of their enumeration, it seems that they belonged to the military departments and had charge of the boats which served as a sort of flotilla on the big rivers, and of the animals required for the supply of the army with various articles of diet and comfort. The tadāyuktakas and viniyuktakas are minor employees, perhaps both on the civil and military side. The Bhaṭas, as usual, are soldiers while Cāṭas, as usual, are petty miscellaneous, chiefly, police officers.

The Bhāgalapur plates of Nārāyaṇapāla (Ind. Ant., XV, pp. 304 et seq.) also give Mahāśāmantas and Rājaraṇakas

¹ For Gamāgamikas, see also Ep. Ind., III, No. 36; Ind. Ant., XV, p. 306; XVII, p. 11.

as feudatories. Besides other officers there are Kṣetrapa, protector of the fields, Prāntapāla, protector of the frontiers, Koṭṭapāla and Khaṇḍarakṣa—police or military officers. It appears that either the king or these officers appointed keepers of elephants, horses, camels, inferior naval and military officers, men in charge of foals, mares, cows, she-buffaloes, goats and sheep. It seems that mercenaries were employed from far and wide. The fiscal system is of the usual type. Besides the three classes of messengers there are Dūtapraiṣaṇikas—those who despatched messengers.

From this inscription some idea of provincial and local government can be formed. Contrary to expectations,

Provincial and
local govern-
ment.

Viṣayapatis are mentioned before Bhogapatis. It may be a mistake or it may be that the terms were used rather loosely at some epochs and places. Elsewhere in the same inscription the sequence of local divisions is stated as Bhukti, Viṣaya, and Maṇḍala. Bhogapati was usually in charge of a bhoga or bhukti, that is, a province. Viṣayapati, as before, held charge of a Viṣaya or district. It may be mentioned that in the Alina Copper Plate Inscription of Śīlāditya (VII) (766-67 A.D.) the term Āhāra is used in the sense of Viṣaya. Dāsagrāmika is the officer in charge of a group of ten villages. It appears that this local division was of general prevalence. Karaṇas were another class of government servants charged with registration, etc. The reference to 'other district officers' shows that there were numerous other government employees in local government. The Mahāmahattaras and Mahattaras seem to be village elders who were not government employees. But their frequent mention in the inscriptions shows that they had a voice in village administration and, it may be, also in the administration of the next higher division. The information about the fiscal system in this inscription is rather scanty. The four villages in question

are granted with the talapâtaka and paṭṭika. The former signifies the land revenue paid to the government. Paṭṭika means market dues, usually charged on all markets. This inscription, like others, proves that kings often displayed great generosity. Four villages are here granted for the maintenance of a temple erected by the Mahāsāmāntādhipati Nārāyaṇavarman.¹

The Nālanda Copper Plate Grant of Devapāladeva of the 10th century A.D. issued by a holder of the three

A Nālanda grant titles, mentions practically all the foregoing officers. Rājāmātya and Mahākārttākritika alike seem to be high ministers of state. The Rājasthāniya is probably a viceroy, and Uparika, a fiscal officer. The Dāsāparādhika is a judicial officer. The fiscal system is the same. The large number of officers in all the later grants shows that the administrative structure had attained to the height of its development.²

We meet with essentially the same system in distant Orissā, though, here, the number of chief officers and departments is smaller. In the ninth century

Ori: sâ.

Talcher Grant of Kulastambha the king has the three grand titles. He has big feudatories, Mahāsāmāntas, under him. He addresses his command also to Rājaputras. Then there are the Daṇḍapāśikas, Niyuktakas, Cāṭas, Bhaṭas and "others." Maṇḍala is used for Viṣaya.³ The Neulpur Grant of Śubhākara (8th century A.D.) was issued by an hereditary Mahārāja who was thus a feudatory. He addresses Mahāsāmāntas and Mahārājas which shows that he had big sub-feudatories under him. The mention of Rājaputras shows that princes were employed in high offices. Kumāra is probably a mistake for Kumārāmātyas,

¹ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 34. Also Ind. Ant., XI, p. 339.

² Ep. Ind., XVII, p. 310.

³ Ep. Ind., XII, No. 20.

counsellors of princes. The Uparikas, Daṇḍapāśikas, Tadāniyuktakas are there as usual. The Antaraṅgas are clearly household officers. The Mahākṣapaṭalādhikaraṇādhikṛita who acts as the Dūtaka is primarily an officer of the Record Department. So, too, the Pustapālas, keepers of books. Another officer is designated as Mahākṣapaṭalika-Bhogika which shows that he combined the offices of a provincial governor and a record-keeper. Perhaps, he was in charge of the records of his province. Viṣayapatīs, district officers, are there as usual. The reference to two villages as situated in two Viṣayas in North Tosali indicates that the last was the name of a province. The occurrence of the term Bṛihadbhogika shows that the governors of the major provinces might have enjoyed this higher title. There is another officer Sthānāntarika but his functions are not clear. From the analogy of other inscriptions he appears to be a police-officer.¹

The administration was by no means so elaborate everywhere. In Almorā, a mountainous district in the north of the present United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the machinery seems to have been much simpler. Two Tāleśvara Grants found there are forgeries but they are none the less valuable for the administration of that district about the eighth century A.D. The monarch, in spite of the undoubtedly small extent of his territory, is called Paramabhṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja which is a clear indication of his independence. In the spurious grant he is made to address chiefs, that is, his feudatories, among others. Besides them, there were many landowners. The prince is one of the counsellors of the king. The chamberlain and the pramātāra are the chief civil officers mentioned. The masters of

¹ Ep. Ind., XIV, No. 1.

the elephants and horse are the principal military officers. The mention of Kulacârikas, that is, heads of kulas or families with the landed magnates and officers shows that society in the hills was organised partly on the basis of clans or families and that their heads exercised some regulating authority.¹

Another grant discovered in Mârwar in the modern state of Jodhpur also indicates that the administrative structure in some regions was simpler than in others. The command

Mârwar. in question was issued by an independent monarch who bears the three grand titles. But his administrative system is rather elementary.² The same remark applies to Bundelkhand.

Bundelkhand. From the 9th century A.D. onwards, the Chandel princes of Jejâkabhukti appear as great builders. They beautified the towns of Mahobâ, Kâlîñjar and Khajurâho with magnificent temples, palaces, lakes and tanks which still survive somewhere intact, somewhere in ruins. But the administrative system of the whole region of Bundelkhand never reached the complexity of other regions. In the Pachar Plate of Paramârdideva which is as late as the 12th century A.D. the king of Kâlîñjar, like his ancestors, has the three grand titles. His territory is subdivided into Viṣayas but his system of government is not elaborate.³

The Sunarpal Stone Inscription of Jayasimhaddeva of Bastar in the modern Central Provinces, belonging prob-

Bastar, C.P. ably to this period, calls the king Râjâ-dhirâja Mahârâja. He makes the grant in the presence of five officers—the chief minister, the Paḍivâda probably the grand chamberlain, the Cavari-kumâra, probably the prince in charge of the whisk, the

¹ Ep. Ind., XIII, No. 7.

² Ep. Ind., X, No. 17.

³ Ep. Ind., X, No. 11.

Sarvavâdi Nâyaka, probably the head of the intelligence department, and the Dâdesan Pâtra Cavakâ, whose position is obscure. In this comparatively backward region, the organisation is different and simpler.¹ Two other inscriptions from near Bastar belonging to the middle of the eleventh century A.D. apply the title Mahârâjâdhirâja to King Sômesvaradeva and call two of his queens Mahâdevîs.²

In Pamparâjadeva's Kaṅkar Copper Plates, of the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D., belonging to the

Chhattisagadh, Chhatt sagadh division of the modern
C. P. Central Provinces, the title Paramabhāṭ-
tāraka and Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara are used

in the ordinary sense.³

The Copper Plate Grant of Vâkpatirâja of Dhârâ in Mâlwa of the year 980 A.D. mentions the usual fiscal arrangements. It is particularly important

Mâlwa.

for local government. It records that a village belonging to the Tipisapadra Twelve was alienated to the temple of a goddess.⁴ It proves that divisions like the Twelve-village, so common in the Deccan and the south, obtained as far north as Central India. It was on the basis of villages and their combinations that areas of local government were demarcated.

The majority of the inscriptions of this period refer to the Mahattaras or Mahattamas of a village. The two terms, though apparently representing the comparative and superlative degrees, have the same political significance, that of elders. Their repeated mention shows that generally the elders of a village were associated, it seems informally, with the regular servants of government in the management of

¹ Ep. Ind., X, No. 6.

² Ep. Ind., X, No. 5.

³ Ep. Ind., IX, No. 22.

⁴ Ind. Ant., XIV, p. 159.

rural affairs. Sometimes they rose high and obtained recognition at the courts of suzerains and feudatories. In one of the grants a Mahattama appears as the Dâtaka.¹

The tenth century Rajor Inscription of Mathanadeva speaks of numerous dues from a village (the object of a grant), customary and not customary, fixed and not fixed, shares of all sorts of grains—the khalabhikṣā, prasthaka, skhandhaka, mārṅaṇaka. The meaning of these is not clear. The dictionaries give no help.² The fines for "ten offences" which are hereby alienated formed a distinct source of revenue. The mention of treasures and deposits shows that the mineral products and treasure-trove were state-perquisites—a fact which is corroborated by the Dharma Śāstras. A little later the inscription mentions a few additional taxes—three viṃśopokas as customary in the market on every sack of agricultural produce brought for sale; two palikās from every ghaṭakakāpaka of clarified butter and oil; two viṃśopakas per measure for every shop; and fifty leaves for every chollikā of leaves imported from outside the specified boundaries. The occurrence of the term Maṭṭadāva in this inscription and of Maṇḍapikā or Śulkamaṇḍapikā in others shows the existence of a regular customs-house in towns and elsewhere.³

Feudatories appear in numerous inscriptions as making grants on their own authority. In the Rajim Copper Plate Inscription of about 800 A.D. Rāja Tivradeva refers to his suzerain though the latter's name is not given in the inscription. He grants to some Brāhmaṇas a village in a Bhukti, which seems to

¹ Ep. Ind., X, No. 17; III, No. 36.

² Khalabhikṣā apparently means the alms of the threshing floor (Ep. Ind., II, p. 179) but its fiscal significance is obscure. For a discussion of Mārṅaṇaka, Ind. Ant., XVIII, p. 83.

³ Ep. Ind., III, No. 36.

show that his dominions were wide enough to be divided into provinces.¹ In the two Prasastis of Baij Nāth, probably of the ninth century, in the North-western Puñjāb a Rājānaka grants part of the daily receipts at the customs house to Vaidyanātha.²

A tenth century stone inscription of Siyadoni in the modern state of Gwalior in Central India shows that the town was for a while ruled by independent kings who called themselves Mahārājādhirājas. Another personage is distinguished as Samadhigatā-śaṅamahāśabda and Mahāśa-mantādhipati. He enjoys all the Mahāśabdas and is designated as the lord high chief of feudatories and may be regarded as the greatest of all the feudatories under the dynasty.³ The plates of Pravarasena II, from Dudia in Chhindawārā in the modern Central Provinces, record a grant by a Mahārāja, a feudatory. It belongs probably to the 8th century A.D.⁴ In Balavarman's Plates of the year 893 A.D. the Mahāśāmanta who had attained the five Mahāśabdas declares himself a vassal, as meditating on the feet of the hereditary Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja, Parameśvara.⁵

The inscriptions bring out very clearly the activity of guilds or *ad hoc* organisations. An inscription from the temple of Garībñāth at Paheva in the district of Karnāl in the Puñjāb, of the year 882-83 A.D., applies the three grand titles to the King Bhoja and his father and then proceeds to narrate how a number of horse-dealers, thirty-three or thirty-four in number, from eight different villages in different regions, entered into an agreement to impose upon themselves

¹ Fleet, *op. cit.*, No. 81.

² *Ep. Ind.*, I, No. 16.

³ *Ep. Ind.*, I, No. 21.

⁴ *Ep. Ind.*, III, No. 25.

⁵ *Ep. Ind.*, IX, No. 1.

certain tithes for distribution among some temples, sanctuaries and priests, in specified proportions.¹ Numerous other inscriptions refer to guilds. Corroborative evidence comes from literature. Commenting on Manu, VIII, 41, in the tenth century A.D. Medhātithi explained Śreṇī as guilds of merchants, artisans, bankers or priests and thus testified to their existence.

Except in the sphere of village administration, the governmental system of the north resembles that of the regions towards the south in all essentials though there are some differences of details. A few points of comparison and contrast may be noticed. The eighth century plates of Dantivarman of Gujarāt show the feudatory Mahāsāmanta as possessed of the five Mahāśabdās and as 'lord of great feudal chiefs.' It appears that sometimes in the North and more often elsewhere in ancient India, suzerains granted lofty titles to their principal feudatories. The administrative system which obtained in the territories of this feudatory followed the usual type. Rāṣṭrapati, however, is substituted for Bhogika as the title of the provincial governor. Both the designations have a fiscal significance. It is interesting to note that the grant is made to an academic institution and is to be enjoyed by successive generations of pupils.² The ninth century inscriptions from Kāvi near the gulf of Cambay only mention the usual officers.³

The grant of Govind III (806-7 A.D.) from Nāsik district mentions the usual officers and items of revenue.*

In the Cambay Plates, too, Govind III, the

The Deccan.

Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, has the three grand titles. His grants intended for Brāhmaṇas are communi-

¹ Ep. Ind., I, No. 23.

² Ep. Ind., VI, No. 28.

³ Ind. Ant., V, 1878, pp. 109 et seq.

* Ind. Ant., XI, 1882, pp. 156 et seq.

cated to Rāṣṭrapatis, governors of provinces, Viṣayapatis, district officers, Grāmakūṭas, heads of villages, Mahattaras, elders of villages, and to such government servants as Yuktakas, Upayuktakas and Adhikārikas.¹ A Devagiri Inscription of about the 10th century, though spurious and unreliable for the subject of the actual grant, is valuable for a few administrative details. Here a Mahāsāmantādhipati has the hereditary title of the "supreme lord of the town Trikuṇḍapura," which was probably the capital of his territory. He enjoyed the privileges of using the Nandanavana umbrella, the horse-crest and the mirror banner—some of the signs of high feudal rank. By the way, he demands from the villagers a supply of grass for his elephants and horses while on tour.²

The inscriptions reveal a few peculiarities in titles. Thus, the Hatti-Mattūr Inscription of the Rāstrakūṭa King

Kṛiṣṇa I, of Malkhed of the year 765
Titles. A.D., substitutes Bhaṭāra for Bhaṭṭāraka.³

Further south in Mysore a Doḍḍahundi Inscription of Niti-mārga and Satyakāma, of the 9th century A.D., mentions a line of Dharmamahārājas, presumably a dynasty of feudatories who prided themselves on their attachment to religion.⁴ Two Kadamba grants show that a line of Dharmamahāmātras assumed the title Mahārājādhirāja.⁵ In the Nilgund Inscription of the line of Amoghavarṣa I, of the year 866 A.D., from the Dhārwaḍ district in the Western Presidency, the three grand titles are joined to Pañcamahāśabdas. This juxtaposition of the titles of suzerainty and vassalage is either a mistake or a strictly local peculiarity.⁶ In almost all other inscriptions the distinctive

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 6.

² Ep. Ind., XI, 1.

³ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 16.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 6.

⁵ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 2; VI, No. 24 (c); V, 18.

⁶ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 11.

significance of the titles is observed. In fact in the ninth century in Gujarât it was possible for a sub-feudatory to acquire the five Mahâśabdas. In the Torkhede Grant of the year 812 A.D., of the time of Govindarâja, a feudatory of a feudatory is called Mahâśāmanta and is said to have obtained the Pañcamahâśabda.¹ The phenomenon is extremely rare. It was perhaps confined to cases in which the difference between a feudatory and a sub-vassal was faint.

In the sphere of local government one of the most striking facts which emerge from the inscriptions of the Deccan and the south is that administrative divisions were called after (1) the number of villages which they contained or were supposed to contain, and (2) the town which formed the headquarters of the administration. The Banavâsi Twelve-thousand is often mentioned in the inscriptions. In some inscriptions Banavâsi is said to be a great city and its governor is clearly a feudatory. Other epigraphic records speak of the Belgali Three-hundred, the Kundur Five-hundred, the Purigere Three-hundred, the Kundarage, Seventy. A single governor might be in charge of several such areas. The son of one such governor was placed in charge of a smaller area, the Nidugandage Twelve which probably formed part of his father's province. Elsewhere a village called Nilgunḍ forms part of the Mulagunḍa Twelve which itself was part of Belvola Three-hundred.²

¹ Ep. Ind., III, No. 9.

² Ep. Ind., XI, No. 1; XIII, No. 14; VII, No. 28; VI, 11, 24 (a); XV, No. 21; IV, No. 30; V, No. 25; XVII, No. 10; IV, Nos. 36, 50; XIII, Nos. 2, 14; XVI, Nos. 8, 9, 11. Ind. Ant., XI, 273; XVIII, 309, 362. Rice and others believed that the numbers referred to revenue figures or value of the produce. But they range from twelve to twelve thousand and appear to refer only to the real or supposed number of villages included in such an administrative area.

Some southern grants give Bhukti, Viṣaya and Maṇḍala as the successive administrative divisions. Maṇḍala would thus be the lowest sub-division above the village.¹ A few peculiarities in official designations deserve a passing notice. In Anantavarman's Alamanda Plates, Rahasya seems to mean private secretary. The keeper of records is called Akṣasālin.² In the Mayidavolu Plates of Śivaskandavarman, earlier than the ninth century A.D., the heir-apparent is called Yuvamahārāja. Vyāpṛita is the designation of one of the local officers.³ Two Anaimalai Inscriptions of the year 770 A.D. from near Madūrā designate the chief minister as Uttaramantrin.⁴ The Konnur Spurious Inscription of Amoghavarṣa I seems to substitute Rāṣṭrapati for Viṣayapati.⁵

The Herbal Inscription of the year 975 A.D. from the Dhârwâr district shows that land could sometimes be alienated as dowry. Here it is recorded that two or three generations earlier some large pieces of territory had been given as the dowry of a princess.⁶ Grants were sometimes made for the daily feeding of some people. Thus in the Baloda Plates of Ti-varadeva, called sovereign of Kośala in the south, a village is granted "together with treasures, together with deposits," etc., etc., to feed daily thirty Brâhmanas, or others who might alight at the rest-house of Bilvadraka. It was a condition of the grant that the charity was to be managed by the Adhiṣṭhâna or local authorities.⁷ Incidentally, the record

¹ Ep. Ind., XIV, No. 14.

² Ep. Ind., III, No. 3. Cf. Ind. Ant., IV, p. 12; XIII, p. 121.

³ Ep. Ind., VI, Nos. 8, 31.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 33.

⁵ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 4.

⁶ Ep. Ind., IV, 50.

⁷ Ep. Ind., VII, 13.

testifies to the royal monopoly of mines. The Mayidavolu Plates of Sivaskandavarman from the Kīṣṇa district bring to view the state-monopoly of salt and other dues. "(Let the area of land granted be) free from diggings for salt, free from (the supply) of bullocks in succession, free from the entrance of soldiers, free from (the supply of) boiled rice, water-pots cots and dwellings—with these and all the other immunities prescribed by the rules regarding all Brahmadeyas" ¹ The demands for the various articles seem to have been made for soldiers, policemen and petty officials. Like some others this inscription furnishes a vivid explanation of the clause, which occurs so frequently in grants, that the area in question is not to be entered by Cāṭas and Bhaṭas.

¹ Ep. Ind., VI, Nos, 8, 31.

CHAPTER XV.

Kashmir and Chambā.

The administrative system of the northern plains obtained with some modifications in mountainous regions

Kashmir. like Kashmir and Chambā. Thanks to

Kalhana one can trace the practical working of institutions from age to age in greater detail for Kashmir than for any other region in the north. The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, as the composition of Kalhana is called, is easily the most important of the few historical works in Sanskrit. The author lived in the twelfth century A.D. and writes romance rather than history for the early ages from which his narrative begins. But as he approaches his own times he gains in accuracy, definiteness and fulness. He based his history partly on *Nilamatas*, blue records, an expression which reminds one of Blue Books. It appears that such records of political and other happenings were regularly kept in Kashmir. Kalhana's long narrative brings to light some novel features of political life.¹

As the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* and later accounts prove, caste in Kashmir assumed a form different from those which prevailed elsewhere in North India. The

Caste in Kashmir. in fourfold division was certainly known

but it lacked rigidity. There was a sharp division between *Brāhmaṇas* and *Śūdras* and a still sharper one between *Brāhmaṇas* and untouchables. The

¹ For Kalhana's life, M. A. Stein, Introduction to the translation of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Vol. I, Ch. I, pp. 6-12; for the scope and character of his work, *Ibid.*, Ch. II, pp. 22-41.

number of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas was small. There are, indeed, some clans of Rājaputras, redoubtable warriors,¹ but there is a passage which shows that these were not native to Kashmīr.² The number of Brāhmaṇas was so large that the priests practically separated themselves from the ordinary Brāhmaṇas. They organised themselves into corporations in numerous places, became a power in the land and threatened or carried out hunger-strikes.³ Many Brāhmaṇas took service under the government and, as petty officials and clerks, were included in the generic term Kāyastha.⁴ There is a record that all Brāhmaṇas were once exempted from capital punishment⁵ but the subsequent narrative does not show that the privilege was universally respected. In marriage the restrictions of caste were disregarded more frequently than in the plains of the north. For instance, in the early years of the eleventh century A.D., King Saṃgrāmarāja married his daughter to a Brāhmaṇa state officer.⁶ The mother of King Jayāpīḍa was the daughter of a petty liquor-trader.⁷ In the tenth century king Cakravarman made a *ḍom*, a woman of the very lowest class, his chief queen.⁸ High office was within the reach of men of low birth. In the ninth century A.D., one of the chief officers, an engineer of Avantivarman, was a foundling.⁹ The son of a Vaiśya who was a watchman in a temple, rose to be the chief minister of another king.¹⁰

¹ Kalhana, *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, VII, 360, 368, 1617; VIII, 323.

² *Ibid.*, VIII, 1328.

³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 710, 905, *infra*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 38; VIII, 2353. The term Kāyastha is first mentioned in IV, 621. Later, it occurs frequently, *i.e.*, VIII, 85–87, 181, 560, etc., etc. It does not yet mean a distinct caste or a group of sub-castes as at present.

⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, 96.

⁶ *Ibid.*, VII, 11.

⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 678.

⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 389.

⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, 207.

Feudal conditions were present in Kashmir as elsewhere. King Meghavāhana in the earlier ages was believed to have conquered many 'kings' in the course of a

Feudal con-
ditions.

Digvijaya and made them promise to abstain from slaughter of animals (III, 27, 29). Lalitāditya was believed to have carried his arms far and wide (IV, 144 et seq.) and imposed his suzerainty on many princes. In an apparently incidental passage Kalhana remarks that the terrified Rājas and Rājaputras confined themselves to their homes, "as if in embarrassment" (IV, 447). The number of Rājas, indeed, seems to have been legion. External marks of subjection were sometimes attached to a whole tribe. It was believed that according to the command of Lalitāditya the Puruṣkas carried their arms at their back and shaved half their head. The particular record may be mythical but the fact of such occasional restrictions is probable. In the latter years of the ninth century A.D. Śaṅkaravarman carried out another Digvijaya (V, 139). As he advanced, his army was swelled from place to place by the lines of feudatory chiefs (V, 140). A council summoned by Sugandhā (904—906 A.D.) to settle the succession included many feudatories (V, 250). Feudal chiefs often played a notable part in the politics of the kingdom as a whole (V, 451-52). They were always expected to help the suzerain in times of war (VII, 48).

The narration of Kalhana reveals the working of the despotism in all its beneficence, its terror and its caprices.

The despotism;
its beneficence.

There were many pious, noble and generous kings. The court of the half legendary Saṁdhimat is said to have resembled the assembly of Śiva and to have been adorned by ascetics.¹ The shrines built by Lalitāditya, one of the

¹ Ibid, II, 127.

heroes of Kashmir history, were supposed to be numberless.¹ In the tenth century A.D. a single king granted 55 Agra-hâras, furnished with various implements, to Brâhmanas.² Many other kings founded Buddhist vihâras or [Brahmanic] temples, made grants of land for their maintenance and also showered generous gifts on Brâhmanas.³ Their example was followed by their relations and ministers. For instance, Amṛitaprabhâ, one of the queens of the Buddhist king Meghavâhana, built a lofty vihâra for the benefit of foreign bhikṣus.⁴ Other queens followed suit.⁵ Kalhaṇa preserves the tradition that Tuṅjina I who ruled in ancient days afforded generous, unstinted relief to his subjects in days of famine.⁶ In historic times, too, there were rulers who supplied grain to people at cheap rates.⁷ The state does not seem to have founded many hospitals in Kashmir at any epoch but they were not altogether unknown.⁸

On the other hand, there were many rulers who almost revelled in tyranny or who trampled religion under their feet when they required money. In the
 Tyranny. eleventh century A.D. King Harṣa plundered most of the temples and took away their accumulated treasures.⁹ The requests of his court-favourites succeeded with difficulty in preserving two colossal statues of the Buddha from molestation.¹⁰ An earlier King Śaṅkaravarman

¹ Ibid., IV, 181, 484.

² Ibid., VI, 89.

³ Ibid., I, 99, 121, 145-46; II, 132; III, 8; IV, 673; V, 124, 158; VII, 1090, 1098; VIII, 243-46, 2391, 2316-17, 3343-44.

⁴ Ibid., III, 9.

⁵ Ibid., III, 11-14; for a similar later instance, VIII, 2432. For the pious foundations of ministers, VIII, 2419.

⁶ Ibid., II, 27-33.

⁷ Ibid., VIII, 61.

⁸ Ibid., III, 461.

⁹ Ibid., VII, 1090.

¹⁰ Ibid., VII, 1081, 1098.

(883—902 A.D.) straightway plundered sixty-four temples and resumed the endowments of many others.¹ Starting on a campaign, Lalitāditya appropriated ten millions from the shrine of Bhāteśa, though on returning victorious, he more than made up for it and presented eleven times as much to the shrine.² All through the Rājatarāṅgiṇī there are many kings who confiscate previous grants, or divert them from their original object or who plunder the temples.³ Kings sometimes adopted other lines of conduct which bore even more heavily on the poor. They would sometimes take possession of a whole harvest in a given area leaving hardly anything to the cultivators.⁴ In 1099-1100 A.D. when a terrible famine and inundation devastated the land, King Harsa, far from thinking of any relief to the miserable, imposed heavy fines on the people, tormented them through his petty officers, and commanded the governors to kill or disperse certain over-powerful tribes.⁵ There were some kings who wasted the resources of the state on their own festivities and drinking.⁶ Others indulged in forms of debauchery too horrible to recapitulate.⁷ Yet others practised diabolical cruelties which make the flesh creep.⁸

In the Rājatarāṅgiṇī the people of Kashmir show extraordinary capacity to bear oppression but even their patience was occasionally exhausted. They

Protest by
hunger-strikes,

protested by means of hunger-strikes which often achieved their immediate object. Thus,

¹ Ibid., V, 16—69.

² Ibid., IV, 189.

³ Ibid., II, 132; IV, 395; V, 52, 170; VI, 175; VII, 43, 106, 570, 696, 1344; VIII, 2756.

⁴ Ibid., IV, 347, 628, 639; VII, 1107.

⁵ Ibid., VII, 1219—27.

⁶ Ibid., V, 206; VI, 10, 150; VII, 285; VIII, 868, 1863.

⁷ Ibid., IV, 659; V, 440-41; VI, 151—71; VII, 1109—14.

⁸ Ibid., VIII, 676—80.

when the system of forced carriage of loads introduced by Śaṅkaravarman (V, 174) led to great oppression, the Brāhmaṇas started a fast to be exempted from it (VII, 1088, also VIII, 2513). Hunger-strike, in fact, became a common resort of people who felt themselves aggrieved. We find the door-keeper of King Yaśaskara in the tenth century, reporting once at the close of business to his master, 'A Brāhmaṇa stands outside to commit suicide unless he can see (you), though I have told him that your Majesty has done with business for to-day, and that there is time to-morrow for his communication' (VI, 43). The king felt obliged to postpone his dinner and redress the Brāhmaṇa's wrong (VI, 44—60). Once in the 11th century, the Brāhmaṇa counsellors of a king led the Purohitas and other Brāhmaṇas to go on a hunger-strike at Parihāsapura to bring about the fall of an obnoxious royal favourite (VII, 13). For the time being, the king yielded (VII, 15). When a bitter civil war between a king and his son in the 11th century threatened to plunge the country into ruin, Brāhmaṇas organised a solemn fast which forced the combatants to make peace for a while (VII, 400-401). It will appear that such a hunger-strike roused popular sympathy and had a tendency to inflame the public feeling.

Sometimes there arose popular leaders who acquired the reputation of experts in the art of arranging fasts. They were generally the leaders of the priestly corporations. They are reckoned among those who delight in the king's misfortunes (VIII, 710).

In the early years of the 12th century when royal servants plundered the Agrahāra of Akṣosura, the local Brāhmaṇas went on a solemn fast (VIII, 898). Soon other fasts broke out in the city (VIII, 899-900) and yet others followed on an alarming, unprecedented scale (VIII, 901-2). The king tried to pacify them in vain (VIII, 903). Large numbers of citizens came every day to watch the

hunger-strikers and discussed numberless plans with them but to no purpose (VIII, 905). The atmosphere was soon charged with electricity and the outbreak of a storm was not long delayed (VIII, 907). In the face of the crisis the first care of the king was to go to the hunger-strikers and try once again to conciliate them. But his endeavours failed once more (VIII, 908). The war went on. It was only when the Brāhmaṇas were frightened at certain exigencies in the struggle that they gave up the fast (VIII, 939-40). So familiar was the weapon of hunger-strike that even rulers sometimes resorted or threatened to resort to it to achieve their ends. At the commencement of the twelfth century King Uccala vowed that if any accused person or any litigant starved himself to death by way of protest against miscarriage of justice, he would himself commit suicide. So, we are told, the judges became very careful.¹ There were other forms of similar protest. Once a thief having died from an over-severe beating, the kind-hearted minister resigned and went off on a pilgrimage.²

In the political life of Kashmir matters sometimes took a more serious turn. There were attempts at the assassina-

tion of tyrannical rulers or their agents.
Assassination, Insurrection, etc.

Insurrections broke out. There were many who would fish in troubled waters and make the situation worse confounded. The pages of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī are full of such incidents. For instance, Yudhiṣṭhira I was expelled from the kingdom and he and his wives had to undergo terrible hardships.³ A new dynasty from abroad now filled the throne. On a subsequent vacancy of the throne, Sandhimati who had resisted

¹ Ibid., VIII, 51.

² Ibid., VII, 602.

³ Ibid., I, 173.

the tyranny of the late king, was persuaded by the people to assume the sceptre.¹ On the extinction of the Gonanda dynasty a Kārkoṭa prince was consecrated "with sacred water poured out from golden jars."²

Often in the course of his narrative Kalhaṇa pauses to moralise on the events in the usual style.³ There is one set of precepts which came down to posterity as the political testament of Lalitāditya and which deserves notice. Its tone is so realistic that it must be held to reflect certain practical tendencies in the administration. "Those who wish to be powerful in this land, must always guard against internal dissension . . ." (IV, 345). "Those who dwell there in the (mountains) difficult of access, should be punished, even if they give no offence, because sheltered by their fastness, they are difficult to break up if they have (once) accumulated wealth" (346). "Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villagers more food supply than required for one year's consumption, nor more oxen than wanted for (the tillage of) their fields" (347). If they kept more wealth, they would neglect the commands of the king (348, also, 349—52).

The scope of the activity of the state in Kashmir is the same as elsewhere in India. Irrigation, for instance, was cared for by the state. In the 8th century A.D., Lalitāditya distributed the water of the Vitastā by constructing a series of water-wheels (IV, 212). Besides the cases of the foundation temples and vihāras, etc., already referred to, it may be mentioned that, according to the traditional history, the ancient king Meghavāhana began his reign by commanding

¹ Ibid., II, 116.

² Ibid., II, 528.

³ Ibid., I, 118—20; IV, 342, 344—48, 352, 701; V, 183—91, 210 et seq.; VIII, 1—61, 195, 993.

his officials to proclaim everywhere by beat of drum that no living beings were to be slaughtered anywhere on any account (III, 5). With the same object in view he undertook a Digvijaya (III, 27) and made the conquered 'kings' take a vow of abstinence from slaughter (III, 29). Butchers and others who had hitherto lived on the sale of meat were encouraged by grants from the royal treasury to adopt a sinless livelihood (III, 6). In strictly historical times, in the latter half of the ninth century A.D., Avantivarman issued a command—which was to be observed till the end of the world—prohibiting the killing of fishes and birds on a vast scale (V, 119). It appears that the king exercised some supervision over the temples (V, 169). King Harṣa (1189—1201 A.D.) introduced new fashions in dress. Jayâpīḍa revived Sanskrit learning by attracting famous scholars and poets to his court towards the close of the 8th century A.D.

The general tenor of the king's personal share in the administration is clear from the foregoing narrative. A few

further details may be added. A king was sometimes on terms of friendship and familiarity with powerful or wealthy subjects (IV, 13-14). Righteous kings were accessible to all, even to the poorest, and ever ready to redress their wrongs (VI, 44—60). There were kings who discharged the functions of ministers (VI, 117). At times of festivity, music or dance, the court presented a brilliant appearance. Singers and artists from abroad were readily welcomed (V, 355-6). The magnificence of the Kashmir court reached its zenith under King Harṣa (1089—1101 A.D.). The chronicler goes into lyrics over it. "Nobody in his court was seen without brilliant dress, without gold ornaments, with a small following, or without a resolute bearing." People from various countries presented themselves. The riches of all countries seemed to be piled up at the Kashmir court. The palace witnessed the movement of numberless counsellors, chamberlains

and attendants adorned with golden chains and bracelets. On journeys, a minister would always be mistaken for the king. At night the assembly-hall, illuminated by a thousand lamps, was the scene of scholastic discussions, musical performances and dances (VII, 881—83, 895, 944). And so on (VII, 946—949). Over and above it all, the king practised magnificent charity (VII, 955). But all this expenditure ultimately led to oppressive exactions from tax-payers (VII, 1100—1101).

A king had usually a big harem which was sometimes increased by questionable means. For instance, a king falls in love with a girl, much younger than himself, daughter of a merchant who was on friendly terms with him.¹ On the other hand, ministers sometimes intrigued with the ladies of the royal seraglio.² The king's household expenditure was generally heavy. In the ninth century A.D. the household was placed in charge of a superintendent designated Grihakritya.³

Harem influences sometimes seriously affected the administration. A singer's daughters, Hamśi and Nāgalatā were taken by the infatuated King Cakravartman into his harem in the thirties of the tenth century A.D. Hamśi was at once designated chief queen. Her relations tended to monopolise all power and office with the result that the kingdom fell into troubles.⁴ Female intrigue, again, was one of the forces which complicated the problem of the succession on failure of direct heirs. Women were, as a rule, barred from the throne. There is indeed the case of

¹ Ibid., IV, 23—30.

² Ibid., III, 497—500; V, 232, 281—86.

³ Ibid., V, 167, 176.

⁴ Ibid., V, 354, 361—90, 404—12.

queen Diddā who actually reigned for a long while in the latter half of the tenth century A.D.¹ She is one of the extremely few queens who regularly occupied a throne in ancient India. But even in Kashmir ambitious women had generally to content themselves with power behind the scenes. Once a royal lady, Sugandhā, wielded actual power for two years (904—906 A.D.). Anxious to perpetuate her influence, she planned the elevation of one of her own creatures to the throne. To achieve her purpose she summoned an assembly of feudal chiefs, ministers, Tantrins and Ekāṅgas. But dissensions arose and two civil wars followed in the course of which Sugandhā herself was put to death.²

Sometimes a mere false move on the part of a king might lead to trouble of the most serious description. In 1063 A.D. King Ananta, urged by his wife, but against the advice of his ministers, abdicated in favour of his son Kalaśa. But when the latter proved his incapacity by his disgraceful rule, the old "king" and "queen" thought of replacing him by their grandson Harṣa. The altercations which followed led to two bitter civil wars at the end of which Ananta committed suicide.³

In the troubles over the succession, Brāhmaṇas sometimes played a leading part. On the deposition of the child-king Śravarman in 939 A.D. the Brāhmaṇas gathered from all sacred places, debated the succession for five or six days but the man whom they set up at last kept them at arm's length lest they should become too powerful.⁴ In his political testament Lalitāditya Mukatāpīḍa laid down that "the elder should be placed on the throne

¹ Ibid., VI.

² Ibid., V, 249—62, 238—340.

³ Ibid., VII, 230—456.

⁴ Ibid., V, 461—66; VI, 2—4.

Do not make the younger king. If, however, through a fault of judgment, this should happen, then his commands should be obeyed and he (himself) protected, though he may be of bad character."¹

According to Kalhana, there were only seven high officials of state until the time of Jalauka, *viz.*, the judge, the revenue superintendent, the treasurer, Ministers. the commander of the army, the envoy, the Purohita and the astrologer. Jalauka established 18 offices or Karmasthānas,² but the king is represented as the son of Aśoka and is not quite an historical figure. All that we can say is that the number of state departments in Kashmir was at first much smaller than eighteen. Much later Lalitāditya instituted another five offices—Mahāprati-
pīḍa or high chamberlain, Mahāsamdhivigraha, minister for peace and war, Mahāśvaśāla, chief master of the horse, Mahābhāṇḍāgāra, high keeper of the treasury, Mahāśādhana-
bhāga, chief executive officer, rather vague.³ It will appear that the administration developed gradually and the number of ministers rose accordingly.

The context of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī indicates that it was the titles of these five offices which were denoted by the Pañcamahā- term Pañcamahāśabda. In the inscrip-
śabda. tions of the plains of India, however, the expression will not bear that meaning. There it seems in practically every case to refer to feudatories who had the privilege of using certain fine musical instruments, or beating some instruments five times a day. The most likely solution of the difficulty which has exercised several scholars, seems to be that the term had different signifi-
cations in different localities.⁴ In Kashmir ministers were

¹ Ibid., IV, 356—58.

² Ibid., I, 118—20.

³ Ibid., IV, 137, 140, 142—43.

⁴ Ind. Ant., IV, 106, 180, 204; XII, 95; XIII, 134; XIV, 202.

called Rājānakas.¹ Above the rest was a chief minister called Sarvādhikāra.² Two or even more of the higher offices were sometimes combined in the hands of a single person (IV, 140). Sometimes princes of the blood were appointed to the highest posts.³ Other relatives of the king also sometimes occupied high offices and exercised influence. Sometimes they made merry if a king died heirless.⁴ The actual power and prestige of a minister would depend on the personal equation but the general importance of their position is clear from a few well-attested incidents. On the death of Avantivarman in 883 A.D., a number of members of the royal family aspired to the throne and quarrelled among themselves. The Chamberlain placed Śaṅkaravarman, a son of the late king, on the throne. Another minister installed a different member of the royal family as Yuvarāja. A civil war was the result.⁵ Ministers could sometimes conspire and imperil the safety of the king.⁶ The commanders of the standing army or bodyguard of infantry were particularly dangerous.⁷ One of the most important military commands seems to have been that of the Dvārapati or warden of the marches.

One of the important offices was that of the Kośādhyaṅga who superintended the treasury.⁸ The department of the Gṛihakṛitya not only looked after palace finance but was also responsible for the management of gifts and endowments to gods, Brāhmaṇas, royal servants, paupers, strangers, cows, etc.⁹ A new fiscal office or Karmasthāna was established by King

¹ Kalhana, VI, 117.

² Ibid., VII, 864.

³ Ibid., IV, 142-43.

⁴ Ibid., IV, 680; V, 127-30.

⁵ Ibid., V, 127-30.

⁶ Ibid., VIII, 294 et seq.

⁷ Ibid., V, 248.

⁸ Ibid., V, 232.

⁹ Ibid., VII, 42-43.

Kalaśa in the 11th century.¹ A little later King Harṣa created some fresh revenue offices to manage his new imposts.² It appears that every head of revenue was managed by a separate official and his department. The organisation of new offices indicates that the administrative system developed according to needs. Justice seems to be the charge of the Rājasthāna.³ In the plains the term Rājasthāniya meant viceroy but in Kashmir the cognate Rājasthāna stood for the chief justice or the chief court of justice. The chief administrative and household offices were often filled by aristocrats.⁴ But according to the evidence of the Rājatarāṅgiṭi as a whole the tendency to the hereditary transmission of offices was less strong in Kashmir than elsewhere in north India.

Among the minor functionaries of state may be mentioned Adhikaraṇalekhakas or official recorders. Their duties were important enough to tempt others to offer bribes to them.⁵ There was a large secretariat of which the members called Diviras discharged specified functions in separate departments. The number of Diviras was increased or decreased by individual kings.⁶ Below the Diviras seem to have stood the Lekhakas, or clerks. The minor functionaries of state, as a whole, were called Kāyasthas.⁷ They do not yet form a caste; they are only a class by themselves. But later the class developed into a series of sub-castes which filled the minor ranks of government service under the Muslim rulers of medieval India.

¹ Ibid., VII, 570.

² Ibid., VII, 1105-6.

³ Ibid., VIII, 573.

⁴ Ibid., VIII, 713.

⁵ Ibid., VI, 30, 33.

⁶ Ibid., V, 177.

⁷ Ibid., V, 181.

Local government in Kashmir followed the type of the northern plains, not that of the Deccan or the South. The representatives of the state in the village were known as Grāmakāyasthas.¹

Local Govern-
ment.

A city was under a prefect who, *inter alia*, was responsible for the maintenance of order.² Prefects were sometimes very corrupt and, what was worse, kings sometimes, though of course rarely, condescended to share their ill-gotten wealth.³ On the other hand, there are cases of prefects carefully looking after their charges and reforming the administration and improving the condition of the people.

There were only too many officials of all ranks who were corrupt and oppressive. King Uccala (1101—1111 A.D.) always thought that "officials in truth are eager to kill, desirous of evil, robbers of others' property, rogues and demons; he (the king) should protect the people against them."⁴ The historian pauses to comment on the king's opinion in yet stronger terms, comparing the petty officials to cholera, colic, exhaustion, crabs, poison, trees, etc.⁵ King Uccala punished them relentlessly.⁶ He degraded them, dismissed them from office, imprisoned them, inflicted fancy punishments on them and reduced many of them to utter poverty, ridicule and humiliation.⁷ The king felt it necessary to endeavour all day long to know what the people thought and how they fared.⁸ He went about incognito among the people.⁹ Such strict supervision on the part of a king must have gone a long way to secure good government.

¹ Ibid., V, 175.

² Ibid., VIII, 814.

³ Ibid., VI, 70.

⁴ Ibid., VIII, 85—87.

⁵ Ibid., VIII, 88—91, 181; also, V, 18.

⁶ Ibid., VIII, 58.

⁷ Ibid., VIII, 92—106.

⁸ Ibid., VIII, 46.

⁹ Ibid., VIII, 55; also 74.

The income of the state was derived from crown-lands,¹ the usual land-revenue which seems to have been paid often in kind,² and customs. Towards the close of the ninth century A.D., the collection of tolls on merchandise was entrusted to a distinct office, *Aṭṭapatibhāga* (the share of the lord of the market).³ Tolls were levied on the bridges and on frontier posts, particularly at fortified stations.⁴ Goods which had paid customs were stamped with a seal bearing the king's name in red lead.⁵ As already observed, the number of state-dues was sometimes increased by kings. Forced labour amounted to a tax. In the ninth century Śaṅkaravarman compelled the villagers who were not called upon to render the forced labour, to pay an equivalent in money.⁶ Unscrupulous kings could reduce the weights and thus defraud all whom they had to pay.⁷ They would make deductions from the salary of village clerks and other government employees. Similar other devices might be resorted to.⁸ Śaṅkaravarman, in fact, reduced fiscal oppression to an art⁹ (883—902 A.D.).

Justice still retained a primitive element in Kashmir. Once a fine is levied on the head of a family for misconduct on the part of a married woman.¹⁰ A king once sent for the books of a merchant and detected a forgery in his accounts. He promptly banished the merchant, deprived him of his property and made it over to the party wronged.¹¹

¹ *Ibid.*, V, 170.

² *Ibid.*, IV, 347, 628, 639; VII, 1107.

³ *Ibid.*, V, 167.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VIII, 136.

⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII, 2010.

⁶ *Ibid.*, V, 172—76.

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 171—76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 175—76.

⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 128—227.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VIII, 8336.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, VI, 41.

Kashmir was the only region in ancient India which developed the art of historiography at all. Besides Kalhaṇa there were a few other chroniclers. On

Other historical works. one of them, Ratnākara Purāṇa, Hasan based his Persian History of Kashmir which is abstracted in the Kashmiri writer Ānand Kaul's History of Kashmir. But it adds little to the foregoing information on administration.

Two other writers who flourished in Kashmir about the same time as Kalhaṇa may be briefly noticed. In the latter

half of the eleventh century Vidyāpati Bilhaṇa, author of the play *Karṇasundarī*, wrote the *Vikramāṅkadevacarita* in which love, politics and warfare march side by side. The ideal of conquest and universal dominion in the narrow feudal sense of the term is there. The picture of Anantadeva of Kashmir as a model of virtue, generosity, veracity and heroism is interesting.¹ His brother Kṣtīpati is not only a scholar himself but a patron of learning and withal a warrior.² The poet is employed as a tutor to the king's daughter who falls in love with him. The incensed monarch sentences the poet to death but reprieves him afterwards. Bilhaṇa winds up the story of his own life by a solemn exhortation to princes, in view of the fleeting nature of all prosperity, to worship those true poets "who work the salvation of your bodies of glory through the nectar of their verse, and renouncing pride make them your spiritual guides."³

Kṣemendra, who lived in Kashmir in the eleventh century and probably came of a line of ministers, stands in a class by himself among later Sanskrit writers. In his *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī* and his *Bhāratamañjarī* he summarises the epics, reproduces their

¹ *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, XVIII, 83-89.

² *Ibid.*, XVIII, 47-50.

³ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 106-07.

political teachings and seeks to re-capture their spirit and atmosphere. None the less, the influence of Dharma Śāstras and Niti Śāstras is there.¹ The same writer in his Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā epitomised numerous Buddhist Jātaka and Avadāna tales with equal success. Here, however, the political ideas are given in a Brahmanical setting. In the Brihatkathāmañjari, based on Guṇāḍhya's Brihatkathā, the politics of the age find a reflection. There is nothing new here. But it is worth while observing that federal-feudalism is reflected in these works as elsewhere.

Kalhana's evidence on administration is corroborated and supplemented by the inscriptions from the neighbouring state of Chambā² which recognised the suzerainty of Kashmir for long. The fundamental political conditions are the same here as prevailed in Kashmir and the rest of North India. It was about 700 A.D. that Meruvarman assumed the title Rājādhirāja which here corresponded to the Mahārājādhirāja of the plains. Evidently the light yoke of Kashmir was shaken off and the dynasty of Meruvarman started on an independent career. These rulers stood forth as the ultimate suzerains of the petty chiefs who had so far been their sub-feudatories. Meruvarman further extended the area of his suzerainty and imposed his yoke on other chiefs. By the tenth

¹ Ibid., Bhāratamanjarī (ed. Śivadatta and Kāshīnātha Pāṇḍuraṅga Parab), Śānti Paryan, Rājadharmāḥ, 298—307, 320, 328, 330—33, Apaddharma, 581—96.

² The Chambā inscriptions are published in J. Ph. Vogel's Antiquities of Chambā State, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. XXXVI, Calcutta, 1911. Pp. 1—136 discuss the geography, ancient history and chronology of Chambā and the general character of the inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions are also given in Ann. Rep. Arch. Surv., 1902-3, pp. 239—71. See also Ind. Ant., XVII, 1888, pp. 7 et seq., Chambā Copper Plate Inscription of Somavarmadeva and Asatadeva (middle of the 11th century A.D.).

century A.D. the line was firmly established with its capital at Chambā.¹ Henceforward, Kalhana never calls them *sāmantas* or vassals but addresses them as *bhūpāla*, *nripati*, etc.² The feudatories are called *Rājas* while the terms *Rānās* and *Rājānakas* seem to be applied to small feudatories or sub-feudatories who exercised various governmental prerogatives.³ A few centuries later their position was well understood by the Musalmān historians who call them *zamindārs*, a designation which they applied to the feudatories of the central Muslim power in North India. In some respects the position of these petty feudatories and sub-feudatories resembled that of the feudal nobility in medieval France.

After a while the suzerains adopted the three grand titles, *Parameśvara*, *Mahārājādhirāja*, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, which were now in vogue all over India.

Administrative Machinery.

The administrative system of Chambā also resembles that of the plains in many particulars. Feudatories were often given high office under the suzerain, a practice which, together with the custom of making grants of land and the tendency to hereditary transmission of office, sometimes made the line between feudatories and regular officers rather faint. In the inscriptions feudatories are generally mentioned before the officers. The occurrence of the term *Rājaputra* in the same connection suggests that the sons of rulers—suzerains or feudatories—were given high administrative posts. The term *Kumārāmātya*, minister of the prince, points to the same practice and suggests that a prince-governor or officer had a special minister to assist him. The latter in some

¹ J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chambā State*, Inscriptions, Nos. 6, 8, 9, 14-15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³ *Ibid.*, Nos. 13, 32.

cases might have been the real administrator. There seems to be a chief minister called Rājāmātya or Mahāmātya as in No. 24. Amātya was the general term for ministers. In Chambā as in Kashmir, Rājasthāna relates to justice. The Rājasthāniya who figures in the inscriptions seems to be in charge of justice and is, so to say, a minister of justice. The Pramâtār was charged with the administration of justice perhaps only in civil cases. Daṇḍika and Daṇḍavāsika also seem to be judicial officers. Kṣetrapa, wrongly written as Kṣatrapa, means a police-officer specially charged with the protection of fields, that is, of agriculture. Cauroddharanika, 'one who is entrusted with the extermination of thieves,' was another high police-officer. The Uparika is a fiscal officer as in the plains, probably charged with the collection of the main head of land revenue. The Śaulkika was in charge of customs; Gaulmika in charge of forests and forest produce. The Akṣapaṭalikas or Mahākṣapaṭalikas kept the records. Kāyasthas wrote out the legal documents. Among household officers may be mentioned the Khaṇḍarakṣa, probably a vernacularised form of the Sanskrit Khaḍgarakṣa, 'sword guard,' obviously belonging to the body-guard; the Chatrachāyika, parasol-bearer, who held the royal umbrella; the Vetakali, a betel-bearer.

On the military side the Hastyaśvoṣṭrabalavyāpṛitakas are the officers in charge of elephants, horse, camels, and infantry. Chariots are replaced by camels. The former had gone out of vogue all over India by this time and would be perfectly useless in a region like Chambā. Virayātrika is another military officer but his status and functions are obscure. The mention of tribes with officers—Khaśa, Kulika—shows that tribesmen headed by their own chiefs, occupied a notable place in the army.

The scheme of administrative sub-divisions in Chambā seems to have been a little different from that of the plains.

Bhogika or Bhogapati and Viṣayapati are there, as usual,
in charge of provinces and districts.

Local Govern- But two other local officers—Nihelapatis
ment, and Tarapatis—are peculiar to the moun-

tainous regions. They seem to be in charge of sub-divisions known as Nihelas and Taras, probably sub-divisions of the Viṣaya. Tara appears to be smaller than Nihela. The sub-division, immediately above the village, was supervised by an officer called Cāṭa, a term which bears a different meaning in the plains. Cāṭa is still the designation of the head of a paraganā in Chambā. In the earlier inscriptions the Cāṭa, *inter alia*, collects road-carriers and supplies for the king, his relations or officers when on tour. Here Bhaṭas seem to be subordinate to Cāṭas. As in the plains, Viniyuktakas seem to be the assistants, something like secretaries, of divisional officers, Bhogikas and Viṣayapatis. Here, as elsewhere, are a large number of messengers, classified into Dāṭas, Ganāgamikas and Abhitvaramāṇas.¹

No. 15, the Suñgal Copper Plate Inscription of Vidagdha, shows the fiscal system of Chambā and the neighbouring states to be the same as that of

The fiscal sys- Kashmir. Here, as in the rest of India,
tem.

justice was a source of revenue. The *daśāparādhāḥ*—ten offences, that is to say, the fines from ten offences, are enumerated among the privileges granted to favourites, with well-defined pieces of land. From the inscriptions of Chambā as from the others in the rest of India, it appears that the land was carefully measured and

¹ For the various officials, *Ibid.*, Inscriptions, pp. 137—255, particularly the Suñgal Copper Plate Inscription of Vidagdha No. 15; the Chambā Copper Plate Inscription of Somavarman and Āsaṭa, No. 25; the Thuṇḍhu Copper Plate Inscription of Āsaṭa, No. 26. For the use of the term Cāṭa in modern Chambā, pp. 131-32.

boundaries of fields and villages recorded with the most meticulous precision. The Suñgal Copper Plate Inscription speaks of the "regular share and use, tax in kind and cash, and every other tribute due to the king," showing that the royal dues were many. It appears that on extraordinary occasions the king's officers demanded or perhaps forcibly appropriated many other perquisites. "Of our district officers and their subordinates and others," so runs a passage in the royal Suñgal grant, "no one will be allowed to alight at his (grantee's) house, to cut or crush his corn, sugar-cane or pasture (?), whether green or ripe, nor to take rooika or ciṭolâ or to take cow's milk, nor to carry off stools, benches or couches, nor to seize his wood, fuel, grass, chaff, and so on. Not even the slightest oppression or vexation should be inflicted on him, nor on his ploughmen, cowherds, maids, servants and all other people that are dependent on him." It may be mentioned in passing that here as elsewhere grants were made sometimes to groups.¹

¹ Ibid., No. 25.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries A.D.

The Arab occupation of Sindh in the eighth century A.D. was an episode in itself which left no permanent impress on the country. The long series of invasions by Mahmūd of Ghazni in the first quarter of the eleventh century A.D.

Musalmān In-
vaders.

was more important as showing the way to India and leading to the final loss of the gateways and the Western Puñjāb to the Islamic power. Until the close of the tenth century A.D. the Gūjrara-Pratihāras carefully guarded the North-western frontier but the decline of their power now facilitated the enterprise of the Sultān of Ghazni.¹ The Rājputs, torn by hereditary feuds and lagging behind in military sciences, had to give way at almost every turn.

Nevertheless the exploits of Mahmūd, though they reached as far as Gujarāt towards the south and the banks of the Ganges towards the east, were essentially raids. Except in the north-west, there was no permanent annexation. As soon as the avalanche had receded, the old surface re-appeared and life resumed its normal course. It was not until the close of the twelfth century that Mohammad Ghori and his redoubtable lieutenants, Bakhtiyār Khilji and Qutb-ud-din Aiyabek, finally reduced the north of India

¹ On the Gūjrara-Pratihāras, A. M. T. Jackson, *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Part I, App. III; R. C. Majumdar, *Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta*, Vol. X, 1923, pp. 1—76; Hoernle, *J. R. A. S.*, 1904, pp. 689—62; *ibid.*, 1905, pp. 1—32; V. A. Smith, *J. R. A. S.*, 1909, pp. 53—76, 247—81; D. R. Bhandarkar, *J. B. B. R. A. S.*, XXI, pp. 405 et seq.

and stamped out Hindu sovereignty. Another century was to roll by before Muslim arms penetrated into the south. For the whole of India, the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. are to be reckoned as part of the Ancient Age, and for the North, as its last period.

The materials for the study of the administrative practices of these two centuries fall into three classes. In the first place, there are Muslim accounts, chiefly that of Alberûni, the first and foremost of all Muslim students of Sanskrit, who lived for a while in India and wrote about 1030 A.D. In the second place, the contemporary Sanskrit literature, both Brahmanic and Jaina, can be made to yield something. In the third place, the inscriptions supply numerous administrative details.

Alberûni is entitled to special weight from his scientific habits of observation and mastery of Sanskrit. He is con-

Alberûni. concerned with the culture rather than with the politics of India. None the less,

here and there he notices the laws or institutions of the country. Caste inevitably attracted his notice. He makes the arresting remark

Caste. that between the last two classes, the Vaiśyas and Śūdras, there was no very great distance.¹ As these constituted the mass of the people, it follows that Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas formed the social aristocracy of the land. It appears that in the districts which came under Alberûni's observation, political administration was not run by Brāhmaṇas at all. He reports the tradition current in his time that "originally the affairs of government were in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas but the country became disorganised since they ruled according to the philosophic principles of their religious codes, which proved impossible when opposed to the mischievous and perverse elements of the

¹ Alberûni, *India*, tr. Sachau, Vol. I., pp. 100-101, on caste in general, pp. 99-103.

populace. They were even near losing also the administration of their religious affairs. Therefore they humiliated themselves before the lord of their religion. Whereupon Brahman entrusted them exclusively with the functions which they now have, whilst he entrusted the Kṣatriyas with the duties of ruling and fighting. Ever since the Brāhmaṇas live by asking and begging, and the penal code is exercised under the control of the kings, not under that of scholars."¹

It is on law and justice that Alberūnt is most illuminating. Here he supplies details which are not to be found in the

Law and Jus-
tice. Hindu literature or the inscriptions. He rightly observes that the Hindus be-

lieved their religious law and its simple precepts to be derived from Ṛiṣis . . . "Further no law can be exchanged or replaced by another, for they use the laws simply as they find them." But he adds presently "laws can be abrogated, for some practices allowed before the coming of Vāsudeva are now forbidden."² In the Court a suitor had ordinarily to submit some documentary evidence, in prescribed form, to substantiate his claims before the judge. In the absence of such documentary evidence, the case was settled by means of witnesses. Witnesses should not be less than four but they might be more in number. Only where the facts were perfectly clear, adds Alberūnt, would the testimony of a single witness suffice. Even then the judge would employ all sorts of tricks and secret means to elicit the truth. If the plaintiff could not prove his claim, the defendant had still to swear to his innocence. On the other hand, the defendant himself might, evidently at an earlier stage, tender the oath to the plaintiff saying, "Swear thou that thy claim is true and I will give thee what thou claimest." Oaths were of many kinds in accordance with the value of the object of the claim. If

¹ Ibid., II, 161-62.

² Ibid., I, pp. 106-7.

the object were not very important and the plaintiff agreed, the defendant merely swore, in the presence of five learned Brāhmaṇas, that "if I lie, he shall have as recompense as much of my goods as is equal to the eightfold of the amount of his claim."¹

The oath itself was regarded as a kind of ordeal. There were five other ordeals successively more serious. In

the first, the ordeal by water, the accused, Ordeals. brought to a deep rapid river or a deep well, spoke as follows: "Since thou belongest to the pure angels (gods?), and knowest both what is secret and public, kill me if I lie and preserve me if I speak the truth." He was then thrown by five persons into the water. It was believed that if he had spoken the truth, he would not drown and die. In the second ordeal, the judge would send both parties to the most venerated temple of the place, where the defendant would fast for a day and then, dressed in new garments, post himself with the plaintiff in the temple. "The priests pour water over the idol and give it him to drink. If he, then, has not spoken the truth, he at once vomits blood." In the ordeal by balance, the accused was first weighed on the scale. He then called on the gods to testify to his innocence and wrote down his invocations and declarations on a piece of paper. The paper was fastened to his head. "He is a second time placed in the scale of the balance. In case he has spoken the truth, he now weighs more than the second time." In the fourth ordeal, "they take butter and sesame-oil in equal quantities, and boil them in a kettle. Then they throw a leaf into it, which by getting flaccid and burned is to them a sign of the boiling of the mixture. When the boiling is at its height, they throw a piece of gold into the kettle

¹ Ibid., II, 158-59.

and order the defendant to fetch it out with his own hand. If he has spoken the truth, he fetches it out." In the highest ordeal, a piece of iron, red-hot and almost molten, was, with a pair of tongs, put on the hand of the accused; "there being nothing between the hand and the iron save a broad leaf of some plant, and under it some few and scattered corns of rice in the husks. They order him to carry it seven paces, and then he may throw it to the ground."¹ It will be observed that while some of the ordeals were extremely mild and even trivial, others were very harsh and severe. Their choice probably depended on the nature of the charge and the sex, rank and character of the accused.

According to the Hindus of the 11th century A.D. the most serious crimes were the murder of a Brâhmaṇa,

Punishments. slaughter of a cow, drinking wine, and adultery, particularly with the wife of one's own father or teacher. Alberŭni's description of judicial punishments shows that the Smṛiti regulation of justice on lines of caste had some basis in facts. He notes the theory that if a Brâhmaṇa murdered a man of another caste, the former was only bound "to do expiation consisting of fasting, prayers and alms-giving." But if a Brâhmaṇa murdered another Brâhmaṇa, he was not to be allowed to do any expiation but must be compelled to suffer the full rigour of punishment in the next world. In practice it appears, a Brâhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, guilty of any of the deadly crimes mentioned above, was deprived of his property and banished. Alberŭni seems to imply that for a similar offence a Vaiśya or a Śūdra forfeited his life.

If a man other than a Brâhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya killed a man of his own caste, he had to perform expiation and undergo an exemplary punishment. For theft the punishment

¹ Ibid., II, 159-60.

varied according to the value of the objects stolen. "If the object is very great, the kings blind a Brâhmana and mutilate him, cutting off his left hand and right foot, or the right hand and left foot, whilst they mutilate a Kṣatriya without blinding him, and kill thieves of the other castes." A woman, guilty of adultery, was driven from home and exiled.¹

It will appear that the priestly injunction to deprive the Śūdras of sacred knowledge was respected by the state.

Disabilities of Śūdras. Alberūnī, in fact, records that a Vaiśya or a Śūdra who dared to hear, pronounce, or recite Vedic texts was hauled up by Brâhmanas before magistrates who ordered his tongue to be cut out.² From the mention of Vaiśyas, the whole passage smacks of exaggeration but it certainly has a substratum of fact in it. Alberūnī is more correct in a later passage where he singles out the Śūdra for punishment for daring to arrogate the Dvija privileges of saying prayers, reciting the Veda and offering sacrifices to the fire.³

Muslim Historians. The Muslim historians who wrote accounts of the relations of Sabuktigin and Mahmūd of Ghazni in the latter half of the tenth century and the first half of the 11th century A.D. do not display any deep knowledge of Indian political conditions and view all events from Ghazni. But the incidental touches in their writings fully confirm the previous conclusions. Al'Uthi, author of *Târikh Yamini* or *Kitâbu-l Yamini* speaks of the vassals collected by Jaipâl for his march on Afghânistân which, after the Arab occupation of Sindh, represented the first armed conflict between Hindus and Musalmâns.⁴ Again, there is a reference

¹ Ibid., II, 162.

² Ibid., I, 125.

³ Ibid., II, 136.

⁴ Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, II, p. 19.

to chieftains.¹ Mention is made of vassals in the course of Mahmūd's campaigns in India.² Numerous Rāis, as Hindu rulers are called in Muslim narratives, flourished in the north-western plains.³ Hasan Nizāmi's *Taju-l Maāsir* which describes the campaigns of Mohammad Ghori and his lieutenants—the real conquest of North India—is also silent on the Hindu system of government and, in broad outline, merely confirms the foregoing accounts.⁴ There was a custom that a king, when taken prisoner, should not reign after his release. Jaipāl on return from Mahmūd's captivity, committed suicide by fire.⁵ Kings and chiefs adorned their bodies. The necklace worn by Jaipāl was composed of large pearls and shining gems and rubies set in gold, estimated at two hundred thousand *dinārs*. Twice that value was obtained from the ornaments on the necks of the king's relations.⁶

It is only from inscriptions that any connected account of the administrative structure can be given. From the epigraphic data it appears that there were differences of detail in the institutions of various regions during this period but the framework was the same all over North India.

The Candrāvati plates of Candradeva of Kānyakubja, that is, Kanauj, belonging to the last decade of the eleventh century A.D., give the designations of many court officials as well as strictly political officers. As usual, the grants are made by the king after a bath, in the present instance, in the sacred river Sarayū at Ayodhyā. The king styles himself Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara. In the usual manner, he

¹ Ibid., II, 27.

² Ibid., II, 38.

³ Ibid., II, 42.

⁴ Ibid., II, 204–43.

⁵ Ibid., II, 27.

⁶ Ibid., II, 26.

respects, informs and commands a number of personages, beginning with Râjas and Râjñis, feudatory chiefs and their consorts. Yuvarâjas, heirs-apparent to the various domains, come next. In the list of officers which follows, the central and local functionaries of state and the household officers are all mixed up together. Mantrins or ministers proper head the list. Then come Senâpatis or commanders of troops, Purohitas, chaplains, Pratihâras, chamberlains, Akṣapaṭalikas, keepers of records, Bhāṇḍâgârikas, treasurers or superintendents of stores, Bhiṣags or physicians, Nainittakas or astrologers, Antahpurikas, superintendents of seraglio departments or of gymnasiums, Dûtas or envoys, then officers in charge of elephants, horses, towns (paṭṭana), mines (âkara), stations or police stations (sthânas), officers in charge of districts (Viṣaya), cattle-stations (gokulas) and others (apara). The inhabitants of the villages granted to some Brâhmanas are called upon to render to the latter the bhâgabhogakara, the turuṣkadaṇḍa, viṣayadâna, etc. Bhâgabhogakara is the usual term for taxes of all kinds, including the royal share of the gross produce, the customs, tolls on sales, ferry dues, etc., etc. Turuṣkadaṇḍa is obscure. It may refer to ransom-money which had to be paid to Turuṣkas or western invaders and which had to be raised from the whole population. As such it would correspond to the Danish tax levied in England for a while. Or it may mean a sort of poll-tax imposed on Turuṣkas or settlers from the north-west. There is no reason to suppose that Turuṣkas were settled in every place of which the grants mention the Turuṣkadaṇḍa. But when once the tax had found a place in the fiscal system, it would be mentioned as an ordinary impost along with others. Viṣayadâna may mean some peculiar district tax. In any case, the number of imposts is strikingly large.¹

¹ Ep. Ind., XIV, No. 15.

Twenty-one Copper-plates of the kings of Kanauj ranging from the second to the seventh decade of the 12th century A.D. throughout mention the three grand titles and indicate the same feudal system. They show that Pattalā was one of the divisions of local government and comprised a number of villages. The clerks were all called Kāyasthas. All the foregoing taxes are here with a few additions. Besides the Turuṣkadanḍa there is the Kumāragadīṇaka and Pravaṇikara, rather obscure (which occur in many other grants), Gokara, probably a tax on the increase of cattle and Jātakara. Any or all of the taxes might be alienated to the grantees.¹ Five Copper-plate Inscriptions of Govindacandra² and two later Copper-plate Grants of Jayacandra of Kanauj,³ all belonging to the 12th century A.D., mention all the above officers and state dues. Some other inscriptions of Kanauj kings repeat the same.⁴ Six Copper-plates of Jayacandra record grants to a Kṣatriya, an hereditary Rāut and Mahāmahattaka. They prove that local dignities were often hereditary and that grants could be made to non-Brāhmaṇas as to Brāhmaṇas.⁵ The Saheth-Maheth Plate of Govindacandra is particularly interesting for its feudal indications.⁶ The Benāres Copper-plate Inscription of Karnaḍeva of the year 1042 A.D. gives the usual information and is important for its clear indication of the claim of the state to the mineral products of the country.⁷

¹ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 11. For another inscription of the same import, Ep. Ind., VII, No. 11.

² Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 14.

³ Ind. Ant., XV, pp. 6 et seq.

⁴ Ind. Ant., XVIII, 1889, pp. 9 et seq.

⁵ Ibid., XVIII, 136-42.

⁶ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 3, J. R. A. S., 1909, pp. 1086 et seq.

⁷ Ep. Ind., II, No. 23.

The Lucknow Museum Plate of Kirtipāla of the year 1111-12 A.D. is interesting as indicating the existence of some religious dignitaries at some courts. Here the Paramabhaddhāraka Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvara mentions Mahāpurohita, Dharmādhipikarāṇika, Daivāgārika, Śaṅkhaadhāri, two Paṇḍitas, three Upādhyāyas, Daivajña, Vaṭhakkura. Then come a few administrative officers—Mahākṣapaṭalika, Āṣṭavargika, Karāṇakāyastha (registrar), Mahātthāśāsāṇika, and Mahāsādhāṇika. The term Mahātthāśāsāṇika is obscure.¹

In the Sevāḍi Stone Inscription of Aśvarāja of the year 1110-11 A.D. from Mārwar in Rājputānā, the titles are confused. There appears a new administrative term. Mahāsāhaṇiya is the great master of stables.² In another inscription of the year 1179-80 A.D. (Mārwar) mention is made of the bhukti of the queen.³ Perhaps the proceeds of the province had been made over to her.

In the Goharwa Plates of Karnaḍadeva, 1047 A.D., appear the chief officers of other inscriptions but Mahārājaputra is used for Rājaputra, Mahāmantrin for Mantrin. Mahāśvāsādhāṇika is the great officer in charge of horses.⁴

The Tarpaṇḍighi Grant of Lakṣmanasena, of the year 1122 A.D., shows that the same feudal-federal administrative and fiscal systems prevailed in Bengal as elsewhere.⁵ The conclusion is strengthened by the Barrackpur Grant of Vijayasena of the 12th century A.D. Here also occur Mahādharmaḍhyakṣa, a great judicial officer, Mahāmudrādhikṛita, a great mint officer or keeper of the royal seal, and the same administrative

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 10.

² Ep. Ind., XI, No. 4 (III).

³ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 4 (XVII).

⁴ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 13.

⁵ Ep. Ind., XII, No. 3.

divisions of Bhukti, Viṣaya and Grāma.¹ The Bengal grants of this period give unusually full lists of officers and state demands.

The Belava Copper-plate Inscription of Bhojavarmadeva of East Bengal, in the 11th century A.D., shows the fundamental political conditions to be the same but mentions a few additional offices which seem to have existed there. The king has all the three grand titles and addresses his command first to Rājans, Rājanyakas, Rājñis (consorts of Rājans) and Rāpakas. Here are the various bodies of feudatories. After Rājaputras or princes who may, in many cases, have occupied high offices, comes the Rājāmātya or chief minister. After the Purohita comes the Pīṭhikāvitta whose functions are not clear. Then there are the Mahādharmādhyakṣa or chief judge, Mahāsaṁdhivigrahika, minister of peace and war, Mahāsenāpati, commander-in-chief, Mahāmudrādhikṛita, as before, Antaraṅgabṛihaduparika, chief private secretary or superintendent of the seraglio or chief physician, Mahākṣapaṭalika, chief keeper of records, Mahāpratihāra, grand chamberlain, Mahābhogika, chief revenue officer, or provincial governor, Mahāvyaṭhapati, chief master of military arrays, Mahāpilupati, chief keeper of elephants, Mahāgaṇastha, chief commander of a gaṇa squadron, Dauṣādhika, a special police-officer, or porter, or superintendent of villages, Cauṛoddharanika, a police-officer who had to deal with thieves, then inspectors of the flotilla, elephants, horses, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, etc., Gaulmikas, superintendents of forests or commanders of gulma squadrons, Daṇḍapāśikas, police-officers or executioners, Daṇḍanāyakas (magistrates), Viṣayapatis or district officers, other Adhyakṣas, superintendents or chief officers, Cāṭas, petty police-officers, Bhaṭas, soldiers.²

¹ Ep. Ind., XV, No. 15.

² Ep. Ind., XII, No. 8.

Another East Bengal document, the Rāmpāl Copper-plate Grant of Śricandraśrī, gives the same list of officers.¹ So, too, the Khairah Plate of Yaśaḥkaraśrī.² In another inscription the word Rāṣṭra is used in the sense of a district.³

The records of the Somavamśi kings of Kaṭāk (Cuttack) in Orissā disclose the same practices of suzerainty and vassalage as prevailed elsewhere in Orissā. India. The suzerain, as usual, employed the three grand titles. Not only feudatories but also high government officials here make grants of land on their own account. Perhaps the system of remunerating high officials with assignments of land prevailed. Petty officials and clerks are called Kāyasthas.⁴ The Kudopali Plates of the time of Mahābhavagupta II, about the 12th century A.D., show that a feudatory could enjoy lofty titles and yet possess a very small territory. Puñja was a Māṇḍalika, a Rāṇaka and had obtained the five Mahāśabdas but he ruled only over fifteen villages.⁵ The plates of Vidyādharaśrī bring to view feudatories and sub-feudatories.⁶ In the Orissā grants the number of officials is smaller than in the Gangetic plains. It appears that administrative development there had not reached the stage which the Kanauj and Bengal grants, for instance, reveal.

The Copper-plate Grant of Vaidyadeva of the middle of the 12th century A.D. is of absorbing interest as giving a picture of contemporary Assamese Kāmarūpa. administration. Probably a Brāhmaṇa by birth, Vaidyadeva was a capable general of King Kumā-

¹ Ep. Ind., XII, No. 18.

² Ep. Ind., XII, No. 24.

³ Ep. Ind., XII, No. 17.

⁴ Ep. Ind., III, No. 47.

⁵ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 35.

⁶ Ep. Ind., IX, No. 37.

rapāla and, politically, a man of first-rate importance. His grant shows that suzerains sometimes displaced disloyal feudatories and put loyal ones in their places. The highest offices might be hereditary. In the present case the office of Mantrin descended from father to son for no less than four generations. There is negative evidence that the number of imposts was not so large as elsewhere. The suzerain, by the way, has all the three grand titles.¹

The Māndhātā Plates of Jayasinhha of Dhārā in Mālwa of the year 1055-56 A.D. disclose the usual feudal and fiscal system. Here the village officer is called Paṭṭakila. The grant is made to a Paṭṭasālā, probably the same as Pāṭhsālā, a seat of learning.²

The Ratnapur Stone Inscription of Jājalladeva of the year 1114 A.D. shows the central Indian rulers founding new towns and beautifying new and old Central India. Here the word maṇḍala was used to denote spheres of diplomacy dominated by one or other of the numerous princes.³ Two Candella Inscriptions show hereditary ministers.⁴ Another two Candella Inscriptions from Ajayagaḥ of the thirteenth century A.D., show a queen constructing a well and a hall.⁵

The Nādol Stone Inscription of Rāyapāla (Mārwar, Rājputānā) of 1141 or 1142 A.D. is extremely important for local administration. Here sixteen Brāhmanas, inhabitants of eight different wards of the town of Dhālopa, and another man named Devaica, a mediator, head all the men of the

¹ Ep. Ind., II, No. 28.

² Ep. Ind., III, No. 7.

³ Ep. Ind., I, No. 5.

⁴ Ep. Ind., I, No. 25.

⁵ Ep. Ind., I, No. 38. See also three Candella Copper Plate Grants of the eleventh century A.D., Ind. Ant., XVI, p. 301.

town in presenting a document, drafted by them, to the ruler. They promise to find out, in accordance with the custom of the country, through the *Caukaḍikā* or *pañcāyata*, whatever is lost by or snatched away from the *Bhaṭa*, the *Baṭṭaputra*, *Dauvārika*, *Kārpaṭika*, *Vanijjāraka* and others on their way. The individuals responsible for a particular ward were to busy themselves in person in tracing out any articles lost therein. The *Mahārāja Śrīrājyapāla* supplied the people with money, weapons and watchmen, etc., for tracing lost articles. The document ended with an imprecation that if a *Brāhmaṇa* refused to share in this task of investigation, he might die like a cur, a donkey or a *caṇḍāla*, and no blame would rest on the chiefs or *Rāpakas*. Apart from its feudalism, the document shows that a town was divided into a number of wards, at least eight in this particular case, that the inhabitants with recognised leaders at their head undertook some important police duties, that all, even *Brāhmaṇas*, were expected to give their personal services in the task and that the whole thing was managed with the knowledge and assistance of the ruler. The document was signed by many witnesses, including the *Bhaṭṭarakas* of temples.¹

A thirteenth century document from the same area—the *Sāncor Stone Inscription* of *Sāmantasimha* styled *Mahārārājakula*—brings the administration of a village to view. The local authority in the village was exercised by the *pañca*, literally a committee of five, consisting of the *Mahanta Hīrā* and others appointed by the king.²

It is in the case of *Mārwar* alone in North India that there is any epigraphic evidence of organs of even partial local self-government. Neither in the inscriptions nor in literature is there anything to enable us to trace their origin and development. But their existence in

¹ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 4 (IX).

² Ep. Ind., XI, No. 4 (XXI).

Mārwar in the last period of the ancient age is undoubted. Elsewhere in the North we only find the village elders—Mahattaras or Mahattamas—informally associated with village officers from the Gupta period onwards. In this respect the North offers a strong contrast to the South which had by this time evolved a regular system of village self-government through assemblies, committees and elective officers working under the general supervision of the government.

Besides the regular taxes of the foregoing epochs, the inscriptions of this period bring into view some peculiar

The Fiscal System. imposts. The Nadlai Stone Inscription of Rāyapāla of the year 1132-33 A.D. from

Mārwar, Rājputāna, mentions the grant of two palikās out of those due to the state from each oil machine (ghaṇaka) to some Jaina saints. To this benefaction there were a number of witnesses.¹

A Paṭṇā inscription of the beginning of thirteenth century A.D. is interesting from more than one point of view.

Feudatories. Under the suzerain Yādavasīnhana were two feudatories, the brothers Soideva and Hemādideva who ruled over "the country of 1,600 villages." They liberally endowed with land and 'other sources of income' a college founded by the Yādava king's chief astrologer, grandson of the famous astronomer Bhāskarācārya for the study of Siddhāntasīromani and other works of his grandfather and relations.²

Most of the extant inscriptions are grants to persons, temples or institutions. They testify abundantly to the generosity of Hindu courts. Recipients

Endowments. also sometimes commemorated their gratitude. For instance, the Govindpur Stone Inscription of the poet Gaṅgādhara, of the year 1137-38 A.D., records

¹ Ep. Ind., XI, No. 4 (VII, also XV).

² Ep. Ind., I, No. 39.

that the poet and his ancestors enjoyed the patronage of Magadha rulers for generations.¹ Of the seats of learning endowed by royal munificence during this period, Vikramaśilāvihāra is probably the finest example. It was founded by Dharmapāla, second of the Pāla dynasty, in the 9th century A.D. The institution was housed in a magnificent building which made room for 107 temples within its precincts. It included six different scholastic institutions where teaching was imparted by 108 masters. Altogether, it could accommodate 8,000 men. The head called Adhināyaka was appointed by the king. This seat of learning had an all-India fame and attracted scholars and students from far and near. There was a tradition that even its gate-keepers were Paṇḍitas and had to be defeated in scholastic discussion before one could enter the precincts. The institution flourished until the 12th century A.D. when it was engulfed in the rushing tide of the Muslim conquest.²

The evidence of the inscriptions and of the Muslim writers of this period is supplemented by literature in several particulars. The close of the ancient age produced several Nītiśāstras—compositions which, in their method and treatment stand midway between the Arthaśāstras and Dharma Śāstras and represent a partial fusion of the two. According to the theory of the Garuḍa Purāṇa,³ the Nītiśāstras are concerned with ethics in general of which the Arthaśāstra forms

¹ Ep. Ind., II, No. 26.

² Nundo Lal Dey, J.A.S.B., New Series, 1909, pp. 1 et seq., quoting Indian Paṇḍitas in the Land of Snow, 39, 58. Journal of the Indian Buddhist Text Society, 1893. Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism, 133. Satiśchandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Bhārati, Baiśākh, 1315, identifies Vikramaśila with Sultāngaṇj in the district of Bhāgalpur.

³ Garuḍa Purāṇa, CVIII, 1.

a part. So far as contents are concerned, the line between Arthaśāstra and Nitiśāstra is very faint, almost non-existent. It need hardly be stated that the Nitiśāstras, in spite of their profuse classifications, divisions, sub-divisions, and multitudes of details, are essentially theoretical and can be used for the study of practical administration only with the utmost caution.

King Bhoja of Dhârâ in Mâlwa, of the 11th century A.D., is known to Hindu tradition as a second Vikramāditya.¹ To him is attributed the author-

The Yuktikalpataru.

ship of many works on Yoga, philosophy, astronomy, medicine, prosody, and Alaṅkāra. He is said to have written the Yuktikalpataru which treats of a huge number of topics, covering law, government, military tactics and accoutrements, ship-building, architecture, precious stones, draught animals, etc., etc.² Here the royal preceptor, priest, minister, counsellor, commander and ambassador are the chief officers of state (pp. 3—6). There are various superintendents, including those of forests. Towns had an administrative machinery of their own. Espionage plays an important part in the working of the administration.³

A Nītiprakāśikā, attributed to Vaiśampāyana,⁴ enjoyed some vogue in the Middle Ages but it contains hardly anything new. It pays special attention to archery.⁵

Vaiśampāyana.

The Cāpakya Sūtras, as one of the versions of the composition wrongly ascribed to the author of the Arthaśāstra

¹ For the date of Bhoja, Ind. Ant., 1907, pp. 170—72. Ibid. 1912, p. 20.

² The Yuktikalpataru has recently been published in the Calcutta Oriental Series.

³ For the purport of Yuktikalpataru (p. 1); foreign policy and war (pp. 7—14, 17—20); for daṇḍa, p. 15.

⁴ Ed. Gustav Oppert, Madras, 1882.

⁵ For its history of Nīti, I, 20—28.

is called, is almost valueless. It stresses the importance of discipline on the part of the king but preaches passive obedience and servility to the 'chief god' as the king is called.¹ The work called *Vṛiddha Cāpakya Rājaniti*² is even more disappointing. It is concerned merely with ethics and worldly wisdom. It is a symptom of decline that *Nīti* and *Rājaniti* had altered their meaning.

About the eleventh century A.D. Padmagupta in his *Navasāhasāṇikacarita*³ celebrated the glories of *Sindhurāja* in the usual manner and reflected a state of feudalism.

The Jaina writer *Merutuṅgācārya* composed his *Prabandha Cintāmaṇi*⁴ only in the 14th century but he based his work on older tradition and may be noticed here. He is half-mythical in his earlier narration and, though he gains in sobriety as he descends to later times, he retains his passion for tales which rebound to the glory of Jainism. The old stories of fabulous kings reflect the traditional patronage of learning at Hindu courts.⁵ Ministers are seen offering wholesome advice to kings and giving them instruction from *Nīti* works.⁶ On the other hand, the pages of *Merutuṅgācārya* show some royal officers oppressing the people. The king, however, comes to the rescue, redresses their grievances and grants them certain exemp-

¹ *Cāpakya Sūtras*, 14, 87, 373, 445, 532-33.

² Published Ahmedābad, 1908.

³ *Ed. Bombay Sanskrit Series*, No. 53. For a criticism, *J. R. A. S.*, 1907, p. 1072.

⁴ Translated from Sanskrit Mss. by C. H. Tawney. On the reliability of the dates, *R. Sewell, J.R.A.S.*, 1920, pp. 331-41.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-77, 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

tions from taxes.¹ Palmists and astrologers are there at the court.² The ideal of a prince's education is set forth when Bhoja is said to have studied all the treatises on 'kingcraft,' learnt the use of thirty-six weapons and "attained the further shore of the ocean of 72 accomplishments."³ The king holds religious assemblies of representatives of all sects.⁴ There is a tragic touch in the fourth chapter where king Bhimasena, unwilling to give the throne to Kumārapāla, his son by a low-caste woman, seeks to encompass his destruction. But the prince flies away.⁵

In the latter half of the eleventh century A.D. Somadeva composed the *Kathāsaritsāgara*—'the Ocean of the Rivers of Stories'—largely on the basis of the *Bṛhatkathā*, which, as already noted, had been written by an earlier creative author Guṇāḍhya in the Paisāci dialect.⁶ In spite of some indubitable Buddhist influence, the tone and spirit of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* are mainly Brahmanic. It is, therefore, all the more interesting to find at the very outset a Brāhmaṇa sentenced to death by the king. The fictitious story serves to indicate that the Brahmanic claim to exemption from capital punishment was not always respected in practice. In the stories the ideal of kingship is high,⁷ but there were kings who fell into ease and luxury and left the cares of state to ministers.⁸

¹ Ibid., 77-78.

² Ibid., 9, 32.

³ Ibid., 82.

⁴ Ibid., 62.

⁵ Ibid., 116.

⁶ On the *Bṛhatkathā*, Keith, J.R.A.S., 1909, pp. 145 et seq. J. S. Speyer, *Studies on the Kathāsaritsāgara*.

⁷ *Kathāsaritsāgara*, tr. Tawney, Vol. I, Part I, p. 163, for the king's duties of the day.

⁸ Ibid., p. 67.

The grant of a large area of land to a Brâhmana by royal charter is interesting in the light of contemporary inscriptions.¹ Later, the rule of Mlecchâs is painted as one of persecution of Brâhmanas, interruption of sacrifices and abduction of hermits' daughters.*

Vidyâpati Thâkura's *Puruṣaparikṣâ*, though actually composed in the 14th or 15th century A.D., belongs to the older tradition and can be noticed here.

The *Puruṣa-*
parikṣâ.

Kings were only too often arbitrary. For instance, king Nanda of Kusumpur deprives his minister Śakaṭâra of all his property and throws him into prison. Another tyrannical king whom even the sages failed to bring to duty is expelled by the people and his brother is placed on the throne.³ There were ministers who drew the minds of their masters away from duty and themselves practically usurped all authority. Ministers, we are told, are naturally of crooked minds.⁴ Every king had a sort of council which, it is urged, should consist of men versed in the Śâstras.⁵

The eleventh century saw another story-book of some literary merit, the *Dharmaparikṣâ* by the Jain writer

Amitagati
Sâri.

Amitagati Sâri, author of *Śubhâsitaratnasamdhoha*, *Pañcasamgraha*, *Śrâvakâcârya*, and other works. In spite of its strong sectarian animosities, the *Dharmaparikṣâ* adopts the current political maxims of Brâhmanas. In its pages, small Râjas flit to and fro. Another Jaina "treasury of

¹ Ibid., p. 43.

² Ibid., Vol. II, Book XVIII, Canto CXX.

³ *Puruṣaparikṣâ*, No. XXXII, Tale of a Repentant Sinner.

⁴ Ibid., XIII, Tale of a Base Informer.

⁵ Ibid., XVII, Tale of a Man learned in the Śâstras. See also the Story of One well-versed in Wisdom. For royal patronage see XXII, Tale of a Man knowing the Art of Singing.

stories," the Kathâkoṣa¹ gives many tales of princes and princesses and shows the small feudalised state to be the norm in Indian politics. At the same time it discloses intrigues, conspiracies and assassination at courts. Kings were sometimes whimsical. A king forcibly seized the wife of another man.² There is another interesting political touch in an earlier story in which a king appoints a favourite merchant keeper of the Great Seal.³

Only a few other works need be noticed. In the Nalodaya wrongly ascribed to Kâlidâsa, a kingdom is treated like private property which can be pawned, lost and regained at dice. The theme recurs in Trivikramabhaṭṭa's Nalacampū. The same story was worked out towards the close of the 12th century A.D. by Śrī Harṣa into the Naiṣadhiya, one of the five Mahākāvya of Sanskrit Literature.⁴ The dramatic piece Satya Hariścandra Nāṭaka⁵ also regards the realm as private property which can be given away to a saint as if it were a piece of furniture. Ballâlasena's Bhoja Prabandha,⁶ reproducing the old political maxims holds forth the king as the guide, teacher and exemplar of his subjects.⁷ Kavirāja's Rāghavapāṇḍaviya simultaneously relates the tales of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata and thus represents the height of artificiality.⁸ It

¹ Translated from Sanskrit Mss. by O. H. Tawney (Oriental Translation Fund, New Series II).

² Kathâkoṣa, p. 38.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ Ed. with Nārāyaṇa's commentary by Śivadatta, Bombay, 1907.

⁵ Ed. B. R. Apte and S. V. Puranik, 3rd edition, Bombay, 1923.

⁶ Ed. Vāsudeva Sharma, Bombay, 1921.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 8, 10.

⁸ Ed. with the commentary of Śaśadhara by Kāśināth Pāṇḍuraṅg Parab, in the Kāvya-mālā, No. 62, Bombay, 1897. The work was supposed to belong to the ninth century A.D. but see Keith, Classical Sanskrit Literature, 56, who dates it about 1190 A.D.

echoes the old politics and is hardly representative of its age.

To the last age of ancient India belongs an interesting Apabhraṃśa Jaina work, Bhavisattakahā by Dhana-pāla.¹ The incidental political references

An Apabhraṃśa work.

in the story, particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth saṃdhis or chapters, show that the western half of North India was divided into a number of principalities, some of which were independent, while the rest acknowledged the suzerainty of others. Sāmanta is the term used to denote vassals of this character. A circle of suzerainty comprising an overlord and his vassals was known as a Maṇḍala.

During this period, as in the preceding one, the institutions of the North generally resemble those of the Deccan and, to a slightly lesser extent, those

Western India.

of the extreme south. There were, of course, many differences of detail and nomenclature. It is worth while bringing out a few points of comparison and contrast by analysing some typical inscriptions. In the Bhandup Plates of the year 1026 A.D., found in the Thānā district of the modern Bombay Presidency, Chittarājadeva is called Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, and Mahāsāmantādhipati who has attained the Pañcamahāśabdās. Like all big feudatories he has sub-feudatories under him and runs an administration which resembles the prevailing system of the country. But his chief officers seem to fall into three categories, Mantrin, Amātya, and Pradhāna. They may be translated as counsellor, minister and chief but the exact degree of the difference between

¹ Ed. C. D. Dalal and P. D. Gune, Gaekwad Oriental Series, XX. The work is also called Bhavisattakahā or Suyapañcamikahā. From internal references it is clear that the work was composed after the 9th century A.D. while linguistic evidence fixes the lower limit at the 12th century A.D. (Introduction, pp. 1-4).

them cannot be ascertained. Mention is made of the Sarvādhikārin, chief executive head, and two Saindhivigra-hikas. Probably, they would fall under one or other of the above categories. Between the Mantrin and the Amātya is mentioned the Purohita. There are two general terms for minor officers : Apradhāna ('not chief') and Naiyogika, functionaries. Four classes of local officers are mentioned—Rāṣṭrapati, probably the governor of a province, Viṣayapati, district-officer, Nagarapati, city-officer, Grāmapati, village-officer. Niyuktas seem to be lower government servants, Rājapuruṣa is probably the general name for servants of state.¹ A distinction is drawn between Janapada, people of the country and Pauratrivarga, three classes of citizens.² It will be observed that the administrative nomenclature of Western India was different from that of the North.

The titles of suzerainty and vassalage are generally applied in the Deccan and south exactly as in the north.

Titles.

The few peculiarities may be noticed. In an inscription of 1072 A.D., for instance, Jayasinha III is called Mahārājādhirāja, Paramēśvara and Śrīprithvivallabha.³ In the Pithampur Plates of Vira Colā, Rājaparamēśvara is substituted for Paramēśvara and the fact of suzerainty over Rājas is brought out more prominently.⁴ In another inscription one of the three grand titles is omitted.⁵ In the Soraikkavur Plates of Virupākṣa of the 13th century A.D., a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara styles himself Rājādhirāja Rājaparamēśvara.⁶ This is one of the rare instances of big feudatories assuming partly the titles of

¹ Compare the grant of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Govind IV, dated Śaka 853 (A.D. 930) which mentions inter alia Rāṣṭrapati, Grāmakūṭa, Yuktakas, and Upayuktakas (Ep. Ind., VII, 39-40).

² Ep. Ind., XII, No. 31.

³ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 30.

⁴ Ep. Ind., V, No. 10.

⁵ Ep. Ind., V, No. 15.

⁶ Ep. Ind., VIII, No. 31.

suzerainty. Perhaps the ruler had many big sub-feudatories under him and was developing into a suzerain. For great suzerains some new grandiloquent titles like Sakalabhuvanacakravartin and Tribhuvanacakravartin had emerged.¹ The Chebrolu Inscription of Vikrama Cola (c. 1126 A.D.) calls the king Mahārājādhirāja, Rājaparamēśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Rājarājendra, Viramahendra.²

The Kalbhan Jaina Inscription from the Sampgaum Tāluka of the Belgaum district of the modern Bombay Presidency belonging to the 11th century A.D. throws some additional light on feudatories. A Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara who paid homage as usual to a Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara, had been duly invested with the five Mahāśabdas. His capital is called the best of cities. He had been decorated with the binding on of the Koṅguṇi fillet of rulership (Paṭṭabandha); he was entitled to be heralded in public by the sounds of the victorious drum of a Śāsanadevi; he had for an ornament the banner of a bunch of feathers; he was governing the Gaṅgavāḍi Ninety-six thousand.³ In the Gadag Inscription of Vira-Ballāla II, of the year 1192 A.D., Jagaddeva, probably a feudatory of the Western Cālukya king Vikramāditya VI, is called a Saptāṅga. Elsewhere he is designated a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara. It appears that Saptāṅga was now one of the new feudal titles.⁴

The Pithampuram Inscription of Prithivīśvara of the 12th century A.D. from the Kiṣṭnā district shows a line of hereditary Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras ruling a territory divided into Viṣayas and conducting an administration of the regular type.⁵ The Salotji Pillar Inscription of the 11th

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 23.

² Ep. Ind., VI, No. 21 (A). Here a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara has got the five Mahāśabdas.

³ Ind. Ant., XVIII, 1889, pp. 309 et seq.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 10.

⁵ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 4.

or 12th century A.D. from the Bijapur district shows that feudatories had banners with peculiar emblems of their own. A golden Garuḍa marked the banner of a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara who had attained to the five Mahāśabdās.¹ The Nāḍagam Plate of Vajrahasta, of the year 1058 A.D. has a two-fold interest. It discloses a line of hereditary Mahārājas becoming Mahārājādhirājas. Next it shows that Viṣayas could be created *ad hoc* and that some of the Viṣayas were very small. Vajrahasta calls together his ministers and other people, clubs twelve villages together, designates the aggregate as the Viṣaya of Velpura and makes a grant of it.²

The Gaṇjam Plates of Prithivīarmadeva of the 12th or 13th century give the three grand titles as well as that of Mahārāja to the king. The latter is spoken of as having brought the whole Sānanta-cakra (circle of feudatories) under him.³

The same system is reflected in the Managoli Inscriptions of the 12th century.⁴ The Ablur Inscriptions of the same century show several grades of feudatories.⁵ In the six Inscriptions at Tirunāmanallur, too, feudatories abound.⁶ An inscription of the time of Pratāparūdra of the Tāmil country speaks of the ruler of a province as Mahāmaṇḍala-cakravartin. Obviously, he was a feudatory.⁷

The Belaturn Inscription of the year 1057 A.D. of the time of Rājendradeva from Mysore vividly pictures the process of elevation in feudal rank. The Chola king presents the chief of Kudiyas, who, by the way was a Śūdra; with a pearl umbrella, a conch, cymbals, and a royal elephant. So he

¹ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 6 (c).

² Ep. Ind., IV, No. 24.

³ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 26.

⁴ Ep. Ind., V, No. 3.

⁵ Ep. Ind., V, No. 25.

⁶ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 19.

⁷ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 18.

was created a Māṇḍalika.¹ An Inscription of Buddharāja brings into view a line of hereditary Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras.² In the Saṅgamner Copper Plate Inscription of the Yādava Bhīllama II a Mahāsāmanta who had obtained the five Mahāśabdās is described as the supreme lord of the city of Dvārāvātī. That city was probably his headquarters.³

The Kolhāpur Inscription of the Śīlahara Vijayāditya of the year 1143 A.D., from Kolhāpur State, shows a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, who has attained the five Mahāśabdās, making a grant to a Jaina shrine in the usual style.⁴

The Bhādāna Grant of Aparājita, belonging to the close of the 10th century A.D., shows a Mahāsāmantādhipati Mahāmaṇḍaleśvarapañcamahāśabda commanding sub-feudatories, regular officers, heads of towns, people of Sthānas—police-stations—chief men and common people of the three principal castes. A Koṅkan Viśaya comprised 1,400 villages. Here part of the revenue is not alienated to the grantee.⁵ It also proves that warfare often resulted in the enslavement of large numbers of men and women. The Gaṇapeśvara Inscription of the time of Gaṇapati, of the year 1231 A.D., from the Kīṣṇā district, refers to families which supplied hereditary servants of state. One of them, a special favourite with the king, received the dignity of a general and of a commander of the elephant troop along with a palanquin, a parasol and other emblems.⁶

The Dirghasi Inscription of Vanapati or Banapati of the year 1075-76 A.D. shows a feudatory—a Māṇḍalika—occupying the position of a Pratihārin or chamberlain at the court of his suzerain, Rājārāja.⁷

¹ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 10.

² Ep. Ind., VI, No. 26.

³ Ep. Ind., III, No. 10.

⁴ Ep. Ind., III, No. 27, also 29, 33.

⁵ Ep. Ind., III, No. 37, also 40. For sub-feudatories, also 42, 43.

⁶ Ep. Ind., III, No. 15.

⁷ Ep. Ind., IV, No. 45.

The Anmakonda Inscription of Prola (1117 A.D.) shows that a Mahâmaṇḍalesvara had his headquarters at a chief town, employed a sub-feudatory as his Daṇḍādhinâtha, judicial officer, and was served by an hereditary chief minister.¹ An old-Kanarese Inscription at Terdâl in the southern Marâṭhâ country, of the year 1123-24 A.D., shows that a Mahâmaṇḍalesvara, with his headquarters at a fine city, having attained the five Mahâśabdâs, "had a trivale played before him." He also had the dévîce of an elephant and the figure of a golden eagle on his banner.²

A Kadambâ Inscription at Siddâpur near Dhârâvâḍ, of the 12th century, throws some light on fiscal arrangements. Various dues were to be collected from various persons for worship and repair of temples. From a body of 60 tenants was to be collected a set of earthen pots for oil; from the gardening tenants, one pâga for caitra and one pâga for pavitra; from another body of 504 tenants, one pâga for caitra and one pâga for pavitra, and one pâga for gâtra; from another body of 300 tenants, one pâga for caitra and one pâga for pavitra.³

A few of the officials in Deccan and southern inscriptions may be mentioned by way of contrast with the North. An

Officials, inscription of the time of Pratâparudra from the Tâmil region calls a general

Nâyaka.⁴ Several inscriptions use the terms Kaṭakâdhîśa, Kaṭakeśa and Kaṭakarâja to denote either a governor or a superintendent of the royal camp.⁵ In the Kaluchumbarru Grant of the eastern Câlukya king Vijayâditya-Amma II, of the year 945 A.D., the Yuvarâja, heir-apparent, is called

¹ Ep. Ind., IX, No. 35.

² Ind. Ant., XIV, pp. 14 et seq.

³ Ind. Ant., XI, 1882, pp. 273 et seq.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 18.

⁵ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 25; Ind. Ant., VII, 17, 183, 189; XII, 93; XIII, 138; XX, 17, 108, 417.

Bhūpati. Here the office of Grāmakūṭa or village headman is given to a man in perpetuity.¹ In the 14th century Rāṅganātha Inscription of Goppana the chief minister is called Mahāpradhāna.² The Nilagunḍa Plates of Vikramāditya VI (1087–1123 A.D.) mention Āyuktakas and Niyuktakas as subordinate officers.³

Two grants of Daṇḍimahādevī from the Gaṅjam district of the modern Northern Circars (in the Southern Presidency),

Female sovereigns.

of the thirteenth century A.D., are unusually interesting as bringing to view female sovereigns who appear so rarely in the annals of ancient India. The queen Daṇḍimahādevī is styled Paramabhaṭṭārikā, Mahārājādhirāja Parameśvarī. Her mother had also been a sovereign. Daṇḍimahādevī issues the grant in the usual manner and addresses her command first to Mahāsāmantas and Mahārājas—the big feudatories. Later, special mention is made of the Sāmantas and Sānavājins who dwelt in the eastern sub-division of Vardākhaṇḍa-viṣaya and who constituted a class of feudatories by themselves. Towards the end mention is made of a Rāṇaka, probably a small feudatory, who acts as the Dātaka. The central local officers mentioned here are the same as in the Northern grants of the last age of ancient India. The village is granted with the weavers, Gokūṭas, distillers of spirituous liquors, other artisans, hamlets, thickets, and landing-places in accordance with the Bhūmichidra maxim. The meaning is that some dues were usually levied from those who followed the occupations or used the places enumerated and that all such dues were now alienated to a Brāhmaṇa.⁴

¹ Ep. Ind., VII, No. 25.

² Ep. Ind., VI, No. 33.

³ Ep. Ind., XII, No. 19.

⁴ Ep. Ind., VI, No. 13.

CHAPTER XVII.

Conclusion.

The close of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. saw the destruction of Hindu independence and the establishment of Musalmân rule over the greater part of North India.

Medieval India.

After another century the daring Khilji leader Alâ-ud-din planted the Muslim standard on the southern edge of the peninsula. The four or five centuries which follow may be designated 'the Medieval Period' of Indian history, in preference to 'Mohammadan Period' which term implies a serious underrating of the presence and strength of the Hindu elements all through. It may be admitted at once that the military strength of the Islamic dynasties was the dominating factor in Indian politics for five centuries but Hindu culture, literature, art and social life were never swept away. They received some influences from Islam but in their turn they exercised yet deeper influence on the higher life of the Muslims.¹ Nor did the influence of Hindu political ideas and institutions die out with the thirteenth or fourteenth century. There were regions where the Hindu administration survived, though in a modified form, while it was vital enough to affect the political arrangements of the Musalmâns all over the country.

¹ For illustrations of this phenomenon, see Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, particularly Vol. VI. Beni Prasad, *Introduction to Samkṣipta Śūra Sāgara (Hindī)*; Kabīr—a study, *Tomorrow (Ahmedābād)*, 1922, pp. 521—40; Kabīr, his Song and his Mission, *Ibid.*, 1923, pp. 41—47.

South of the Kṛiṣṇā, the old Hindu life re-asserted itself soon after the first Muslim shock and resumed its cultural and political career under the ægis of the Vijayanagara Empire which lasted in vigour until the battle of Tālikoṭa in 1565. There the old stream of Hindu political thought and institutions continued and developed into a new phase. The Vijayanagara empire was essentially a feudal-federal structure of the ancient Hindu type; the suzerains and feudatories used high-sounding titles as of old; the state regulated the economic life of the people; the courts patronised learning, poetry and art; the traditions of religious toleration were, as a rule, maintained.¹ Even after the fall of Vijayanagara, the Hindu system did not come to an end. Neither the Deccan Sultāns who had humbled Vijayanagara nor the great Mughal Emperor Aurāṅzeb, before whom they went down in their turn in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, succeeded in establishing any stable Muslim administration in the south. Hindu principalities lingered on until they were engulfed in the currents and cross-currents of the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in the south which terminated in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Certain features of their polity were adopted by the English East India Company whose dominion was established over nearly the whole of the present Madras Presidency by the close of the eighteenth century. Thus, as Krishnaswamy Aiyangar puts it, the administration of the great Cholās is, through the Vijayanagara Empire, the ancestor of the present Madras revenue and fiscal administration.

¹ S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History*; *Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*; *South India and her Musalmān Invaders*; R. Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire*; Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*. The inscriptions of the period are given in *Epigraphia Indica*, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, Madras Government Epigraphist's Reports, South Indian Inscriptions.

Further north, the Koṅkan, the narrow strip of land between the Western Ghats and the sea retained its autonomy throughout the medieval period. The

The Marāṭhā
Administrative
System.

Marāṭhās whose homeland it formed were indeed deeply influenced by their contact with the Deccan Sultāns, particularly, by the Nizāmsāhi court of Ahmadnagar, where they played the game of high politics with skill and dexterity. Through the Sultanates the Marāṭhās also received ideas and suggestions from the Mughals whose impact roused their energies in the seventeenth century A.D.¹ Nevertheless, the new Marāṭhā State which reared its head in the latter half of the seventeenth century and which, within two generations, developed into an empire, reproduced certain features of ancient Hindu polity. The coronation of Śivāji, the founder of the Marāṭhā power, which symbolised the emergence of a new factor of first-rate importance in Indian politics, was performed at Rāigaḍh in 1674 A.D. in studiously orthodox Brahmanic style. The administrative system of the Marāṭhās represented a fusion of Hindu and Musalmān elements. The number of the Aṣṭapradhāna or Council of Eight which Śivāji instituted reminds one of the Mahābhārata and Manusmṛiti. The Council of Bārbhāis or Twelve Brothers which emerged later and which was destined to be set aside by Nānā Fadnavis, also carries the mind to ancient India. The designations of some of the officers—Amātya, Mantri, Saciva, Senāpati—were borrowed from old Hindu practice. The numerous Lekhakas formed the counterpart of Kāyasthas.² The eighteen Kārkhānās,

¹ On Marāṭhā History, Grant Duff, History of the Mahrattas; Kincaid and Parasnis, History of the Marāṭhā People; Ranade, Rise of the Marāṭhā Power; J. N. Sarkar, Śivāji and his Times; G. S. Sardesai, Marāṭhī Riyāsat (Marāṭhī) and Main Currents of Marāṭhā History.

² Chitnis, p. 168.

and twelve Mahāls, altogether thirty departments which Śivāji organised, were designed, of course, primarily to meet the exigencies of the situation. But naturally they were based partly on old Marāṭhā practice and on contemporary institutions in other parts of India. Their description in the Marāṭhā chronicles reminds one as much of Abul Fazl's *Āin-i-Akbarī*, the astounding Imperial Gazetteer of the Mughal Empire as of the Kauṭīliya *Arthaśāstra* and the inscriptions which lie between the Gupta period and the last age of ancient India. They included Treasury, Cash, Jewellery, Harem, Agriculture, Liquor, Chariots, Mints, etc.¹ In the domain of local government the designation of the Marāṭhā village officer, the Pāṭil, corresponded to the Paṭṭakila of the inscriptions which, in its turn, was akin to the Akṣapaṭalika or Mahākṣapaṭalika which occurs so frequently in ancient epigraphic records. The Pāṭil answered also to the ancient Grāmaḍhipati and, like him, performed some police, judicial and fiscal duties. The other Marāṭhā village officer, Kulakarṇi, is reminiscent of the ancient Karaṇika. The dues levied from the people again recall the ancient inscriptions and are, in fact, more numerous than those mentioned in any single inscription of old. A list of twenty-two of them has been compiled from a Marāṭhī deed of sale. Besides the usual land revenue, they include a bundle of fuel, a quantity of grain, and twenty-five bundles of jawār sticks from each cultivator, nine ṭākas of oil from each oil-mill, thirteen leaves per day from each seller of betel leaves, one goat from each herd on the Daśerā (Vijayadaśami) day, one piece of cloth per loom per year from all classes of weavers, half a cocoanut from every marriage-negotiation, every ordinary marriage as well as every widow-remarriage, some

¹ *Sabhāśad*, pp. 94-95.

vegetables from vegetable-growers, usual tolls from each seller in the market and every petty trader's stall, $\frac{1}{4}$ th seer per bag of grocery from a grocer's shop, etc., etc. These payments in kind went to support the local officials as in ancient times. In spite of all their weaknesses, the Marāṭhā rulers were, like the kings and statesmen of old, often conscious of high ideals. "Propagate the Dharma of Mahārāṣṭra," said Rāmadāsa, the preceptor of Śivāji to the latter's son Sambhāji.¹ The Marāṭhā regime was the Augustan age of Marāṭhi literature and was equally remarkable for the intense cultivation of Sanskrit learning. The Marāṭhā rulers covered the country with temples and images, forts and palaces, tanks and anicuts, many of which still survive intact or in ruins. Their charity halls were almost innumerable. Religious toleration was the rule in Mahārāṣṭra. In all this the Marāṭhās were in line with the ancient Hindu tradition. They were in line with it also at some weak points. The administrative organisation was not rigid enough. The Marāṭhā empire of the eighteenth century was a mere confederacy. The Gāekwād of Barodā, Sindhiā of Gwālior, Holkar of Indore and the Bhonslā of Nāgpur recognised the hegemony of the *de facto* king, Peśwā of Poonā, or the *de jure* monarch, the Rāja of Satārā, in a very rough and ready fashion. They would sometimes rally to his standard and sometimes war with him. Sometimes they would fight among themselves and sometimes band together against the common foe. With obvious differences of setting and detail, they acted the political drama of ancient India on the stage of the eighteenth century.

Even in the North where, thanks to the continuous influx from the North-west, Muslim influence was much deeper

¹ For the political reflections of Rāmadāsa (1608—82 A.D.), see his Marāṭhi Classic, *Dāsabodha*, *Daśaka* X, *Samāsa* 6; XII, 10; XIV, 6; XV, 3; XVI, 10; XIX, 6, etc.

and more extensive, there were a few small tracts and one

large area which retained their autonomy
In the North.

for long. There Hindu institutions survived, of course, in a modified form. The subject is too vast to be treated here in detail but a few instances from a late period may be given to illustrate the persistence of the Hindu system. As late as the seventeenth century A.D., Khurdâ, a small, rather primitive district on the borders of Orissâ and Golkundâ, modelled its army on the Hindu system which had become antiquated by that time.¹ In the seventeenth century, again, the small state of Kishwâd to the south of Kashmir, close to the Puñjâb border, had a fiscal system which bore some affinity to that of the Hindus. Every customer had to pay four rupees per two seers of saffron purchased. Fines, always heavy and particularly severe in the case of rich folk, formed the greatest source of the public income.² The annals of Kângrâ in the north-eastern Puñjâb, which, in spite of 52 sieges did not surrender to Musalmânas until 1620 A.D., disclose the old Hindu feudal-federalism in full force. 'The 'zemin-dârs,' as the Hindu chiefs are called by Muslim historians, stood in relations of suzerainty and vassalage to one another.'³ The Bâra Bhuñyas or Twelve Landholders who exercised sway in some Bengal tracts in a semi-independent capacity after the Muslim conquest and who created trouble

¹ Bahâristân-i-Ghaibî, Paris Ms., summarised by J. N. Sarkar, J. B. O. R. S., II, Part I, pp. 53-56. Jahângirnâmâ (ed. Rogers, tr. Beveridge), I, 433.

² Motamad Khân, Iqbâl-nâmâ, pp. 143-46; Jahângirnâmâ (Rogers and Beveridge), II, 137-39; Shâh Nawâz Khân, Maâsir-ul-umârâ (tr. Beveridge), I, 490.

³ Jahângirnâmâ (R. and B.), II, 184; Fath Kângrâ in Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own Historians, VI, 526. See also Elliot and Dowson, II, 34, 444-45; III, 405-7, 515, 570; IV, 67, 415, 455.

for Muslim rulers until the seventeenth century, also organised themselves, rather loosely, after the traditional Hindu system.¹

It is, however, Rājputānā which furnishes the most striking example of the survival of Hindu institutions in the North. Here the Rājputs established themselves after they had been driven out of the Gangetic plains. Though forced to acknowledge Muslim suzerainty from time to time, the Rājput States, with the exception of Ajmer, the *point d'appui*, were never annexed to Muslim empire. In the eighteenth century and early years of the nineteenth, the Marāṭhās harassed the Rājputs but did not extinguish their autonomy. In modern times the British Government has left them pretty much to themselves. The old institutions were certainly modified by three factors—the presence of a large aboriginal population, constant pressure from outside and the example of Muslim organisation. Nevertheless, before modern influences and, particularly, the modern means of communication, warfare and industrial organisation affected Rājputānā, its institutions resembled those of ancient India in many points. In Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān*, supplemented by more recent additions to our knowledge, Rājputānā appears in some respects as a miniature edition of ancient India.² The small size of the state, interneocine warfare, relationships of suzerainty and vassalage, constant attempts to throw off the yoke—all

¹ James Wise, J. A. S. B., 1874, pp. 194–214; *Ibid.*, 1875, pp. 181–83; Beveridge, J. A. S. B., 1904, pp. 57–63; Hosten, J. A. S. B., 1913, pp. 437–49. The Bengali works, *Pratāpāditya* by Nikhil Nath Roy and

'The Life of Pratāpāditya, the last Hindu King of Bengal' by Satya Charan Sāstri give the traditions which cluster round the figure of the leader of the Bāra Bhuñyas. See also two other Bengali works, 'History of Murshidābād' by Nikhil Nath Roy and 'History of Bengal' by R. D. Banerji.

² Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān* (Routledge and Sons); Kaviśāya Shyamal Das, *Vira Vinoda* (Hindi); Gauri Shankar Hirachand Ojha, *Rājasthāna* (Hindi); Naipastikhyāt, a valuable original work, pub. 1925; Tessitori, *Historical and Bardic Survey of Rājputānā*.

this carries the mind to the ancient age. In Rājapūtānā there were gradations of feudal chieftains, in some places, four in successive order.¹ Here, too, vassals were sometimes associated in the administration of the suzerain's territory.² Suzerains and feudatories alike had big harems which, as in ancient India, sometimes reacted dangerously on the politics of the state. A state was parcelled out into a number of districts. In certain tracts a district comprised generally from fifty to one hundred townships and villages, though the proportion was sometimes exceeded. Many of these divisions were called Caurāsis—'eighty fours'—collections of 'eighty-four' villages, an expression which reminds one of Central Indian and Southern administrative jargon. Caurāsi, however, is like eighteen, a sort of sacred number among the Hindus. It only indicates that the average number of villages in such a district would range from somewhere about seventy-five to somewhere about a hundred. The chief officer of the district performed both civil and judicial functions. There was also another officer charged with military, fiscal and some judicial duties. The judicial procedure reminds one of ancient India. A town or a village had a Cabātrārā or court where the headman or the judicial officer, assisted by some inhabitants of the locality, marked out by public opinion for indefinite periods, administered justice.³ Taxes and tolls were numerous as in ancient India. Besides the land revenue and customs, we read of Ganīm-burrār, war-tax, corresponding perhaps to the Turuṣkadaṇḍa of the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D., Ghar-burrār, house-tax, Hal-burrār, plough-tax, Neotā-burrār, marriage-tax.⁴ There were various other imposts in different

¹ Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rājasthān* (ed. Routledge), I, p. 117.

² *Ibid.*, I, 116.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 119-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 118, 119.

regions, such as those on sales.¹ As in ancient days there were special frontier-officers always appointed from the headquarters and corresponding to the Antapâlas of literature and the inscriptions.² At the top of the administration stood a few ministers, often four in number, generally headed by a Pradhâna or chief minister who, needless to say, was responsible to the Râja.³ As in ancient days again, government servants, high and low alike, were not infrequently hereditary. Payments were often made in grants of land which, along with the hereditary transmission of office, must have accentuated feudalism. There were numerous court and household officers who held large grants of land. As in antiquity there were titles and other insignia of dignity such as standards, kettledrums, heralds.⁴ Râjpûta magnates followed the ancient tradition of making grants to poets, scholars, priests, or favourites and remitting the whole or part of the revenues. The state sometimes concerned itself with minute affairs of life. Thus, it was once enacted that none shall attempt to carry anything away from the public feast. A Jaina obtained a charter to the effect that none shall eat after sunset.⁵ It may be added that custom and usage regulated the rights and tenures of land and public affairs in general in Râjpûtanâ as in ancient India.⁶

The fundamental political conditions of Râjpûtanâ are well reflected in the great Hindi epic Prithvirâjarâso which, though ascribed by tradition to Candabardâi, the bard of Prithvirâja Cauhâna, the renowned, though ultimately unsuccessful, champion of Hindu India against Muhammad

Evidence of
Literature.

¹ Ibid., I, 111.

² Ibid., I, 116.

³ Ibid., I, 119.

⁴ Ibid., I, 115, 116.

⁵ Ibid., I, 111.

⁶ Ibid., I, 110; on feudal incidents, Ibid., I, Ch. III, pp. 128-41.

Ghori in the 12th century A.D., is really a collection of bardic lays composed in Dīngal Hindi, the peculiar mixed idiom of heroic poetry, by various minstrels through several centuries in medieval Rājputānā. Some passages are as late as the seventeenth century A.D.¹ Rājas, Sāmantas, aristocrats abound throughout the Rāso. Its feudalism is sometimes several layers deep. The government which is mirrored in its pages has fallen from the ancient cultural standards but its structure, while certainly less elaborate, follows the old pattern. The conclusions to which the study of the Rāso leads are amply supported by other Rājput compositions of a similar type which are preserved in Mss. in palace libraries and private collections, particularly in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Bāndi. The prefaces or conclusions of many ordinary Hindi and Sanskrit books which were written or copied in the latter half of the sixteenth or in the seventeenth century and which may be read in Mss. in various collections in the modern state of Jaipur bring out one very interesting fact. At the commencement or at the end they glorify Rājā Mān Singh who, as a vassal of the Mughal emperors Akbar and Jahāngir, ruled his hereditary patrimony of Āmer (Amber or modern Jaipur) and also occupied one of the very highest positions in the service of his suzerain. He governed an important imperial province like Bengal. He commanded imperial armies on momentous expeditions, even against the Rājput state of Chittor or modern Udaipur. In the notices of Jaipur Mss. his campaigns are represented as a Digvijaya and celebrated as the conquest of the

¹ The work has been edited and published by the Kāśī Nāgarī Pracārīṇī Sabhā, Benāres and the Nāgarī Pracārīṇī Sabhā, Ārrāh. For criticism, Mīra Brothers, Mīra Bandhu Vinoda, I, pp. 227-86; Hindi Navaratna, Ch. I; Kavirāja Shyamal Das, J.A.S.B., 1886, Pt. I, pp. 5-65. In reply to the last, Mohan Lal Vishnu Lal Pandya, A Defence of Prithvīrāja Rāso, Benāres, 1887.

whole world or the whole of India. Yet he was only a feudatory and an imperial officer. Once again the Hindu mind failed to grasp firmly the distinction between autonomy and independence. It may be added that the career of Mân Singh was by no means unique in the annals of medieval India. Other Râjpât princes like Bhagvân Dâs, Sarbuland Râi, Jaswant Singh, Jai Singh, while governing their own territories, managed to play a high role in imperial politics and to rank in the highest grade of imperial officers—Mansabdârs as they were called. The conclusions on feudalism in Râjpûtânâ hold good of Central India as the genealogies, bardic lays and notices in general books, preserved in Ms. collections in central India, particularly in the palace library of Ohhatarpur, prove. Of all this we can be perfectly sure, thanks to the contemporary Persian chronicles. Similar seems to have been the position of vassals in ancient India as indicated by the inscriptions. Like the Râjpât princes of medieval India, they received titles, commands and governorships from the suzerain and at the same time generally ruled their own territories as autonomous princes. If the ancient Hindus had cared to write their history, the statements and indications to this effect in the inscriptions and in Yuan Chwang might have been borne out in ample detail.¹

It is not merely the Hindu principalities of Medieval India which testify to the persistence of the Hindu administrative tradition. Hindu influence is perceptible on the systems of Muslim administration which prevailed over the greater part of the country from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century and lasted far into

¹ For the careers of Râjpât princes in Mughal service, see Abul Fazl, Akbarnâmâ, Jahângirnâmâ, Motamad Khân, Iqbâlnâmâ, Kâmgar Husainî, Maâsir-i-Jahângirî (Khudâ-Baksh Ms.), Abdul Hamid Lahorî, Pâdshâhnâmâ, Shâh Nawaz Khân, Maâsir-ul-umârâ.

the eighteenth. It may be admitted at once that both the so-called Pathân administration (13th—15th century A.D.) and the Mughal administration (16th—18th century A.D.) hit upon devices of their own to meet the circumstances of the times. Then there was the law of the Qurân and Hadis, binding on the whole body of the Faithful, to exercise a deep influence on Muslim politics in India as elsewhere. There is again enough evidence to show that the institutions of Musalmâns in India were affected by the political ideas and practices of the western Muslim countries particularly by the example of the courts of Baghdâd and Cairo and, from the sixteenth century onwards, by Persia, the glory and mistress of the Muslim world. Nevertheless in several important branches the Muslim administration in India largely retained the old practices. Throughout the medieval period the ancient revenue and fiscal arrangements lasted in India. The Muslims simply took over the old fiscal divisions, the old fiscal system and the old classes of officers. For long they did not directly collect the taxes but employed for the purpose agencies which adhered to the old methods. Many of the old divisions and sub-divisions of ordinary local administration were retained. They all appear in the *Âin-i-Akbarî*, the great imperial gazetteer compiled by the Allâmi Abul Fazl in the reign of Akbar towards the close of the sixteenth century. The *Âin*, supplemented by Persian chronicles, shows that under the pressure of tradition and environment the Muslim administration was reproducing some of the old conditions. Certain *Âin* descriptions of even unimportant matters like the imperial harem,¹ ensigns of royalty, *inter alia*, musical instruments,² division and sub-division of precious stones,³ specific gravity,⁴ remind one of the

¹ *Âin-i-Akbarî*, *Âin*, 15.

² *Ibid.*, *Âin*, 19.

³ *Ibid.*, *Âin*, 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Âin*, 14.

Kautiliya Arthasāstra. In the sixteenth century A.D. when the Muslim state in India, after three centuries of unsettlement, had caught up with antiquity, some of the prominent features of Hindu administration re-appeared. Survey and record of land, administrative sub-divisions, ubiquitous espionage, regular secretariats, pomp and glory of the court—all resembled the Hindu system. What was even more important, the regime of Sher Shāh and, following it, the Mughal empire revived the tradition of religious toleration, religious discussion and patronage of learning.¹ The Persian chroniclers have preserved long lists of the literate whom the generosity of the Mughal court raised above want, even to affluence.² As one studies the biographies of contemporary Hindi poets, one is struck by the large number of those who received the patronage of Muslim courts. In the lives of some of them, the only certain fact is that they visited the Mughal court at some time.³ Such was the force of the ancient tradition that the Mughal state

¹ Ābul Fazl, Āin-i-Akbarī, Akbar-nāmā, Father Anthony Monserrate, *Mongolice Legationum Commentarius*, ed. Hosten, Asiatic Society of Bengal Memoir, III, No. 9, pp. 508—704, with translation of important passages. Another translation and notes by J. S. Hoyland and S. N. Banerji. Father Pierre Du Jarric of Toulouse, *Histoire des Choses plus memorables, etc.*, or *Thesaurus Rerum Indicarum*, etc. E. D. MacLagan, *Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar*, J. A. S. B., Part I, Vol. LXV, 1896, pp. 38—113. Sir Thomas Roe, *Embassy to India*, ed. Foster, p. 314; Edward Terry in *Purchas His Pilgrims*, IX, p. 52; Della Valle, *Travels*, I, 30, 120—29.

² For the reign of Akbar (1556—1607), Āin-i-Akbarī; for that of Jahāngīr, *Jahāngīr-nāmā*, (R. and B.), I, 46; II, 257, 346; Motamad Khān, *Iqbal-nāmā*, 308; Mohammad Hādī, p. 20; for the reign of Shāh Jahān (1627—1658), Abdul Hamīd Lāhorī, *Pādshāh-nāmā*.

³ Reports on the Search for Hindi Mss. Kāśī Nāgarī Pracārīṇī Sabhā; Saiṅgar, Śiva Singh Saroja, Mīśra Brothers, Mīśra Bandhu Vinoda, Vols. I and II; Beni Prasad, *A Few Aspects of Education and Literature under the Great Mughals*, Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the Indian Historical Records Commission, pp. 44—56,

could not lose sight of Sanskrit in its effort to encourage and guide education. One of the regulations recorded by Abul Fazl lays down that "in studying Sanskrit students ought to learn the Bayakaran (Vyākaraṇa), Niyai (Nyāya), Bedānta (Vedānta) and Patañjal (Patañjali).¹ Once again, the state, in spite of its predominantly non-Hindu character, made an effort to regulate social life, though in a different manner. Akbar sought to abolish Sati or widow-burning and compulsory widowhood and to discourage child-marriage and polygamy.² Jahāngir forbade a new peculiar form of Sati prevalent among Hindu converts to Islām who buried their widows with their husbands.³ He interdicted the practice of intermarriage between Hindus and Musalmāns prevalent in some hill-tracts.⁴ Another point at which the Muslim state now linked itself with antiquity was philanthropic activity. For instance, following the example of Akbar, Jahāngir commanded the erection of rest-houses and mosques, schools and hospitals and the appointment of physicians in big towns at the expense of the state.⁵ The Muslim sovereigns made numerous grants of land to poets, priests, scholars, and favourites. The farmāns as they were called, have exactly the same significance as the Sanskrit Śāsana which used to denote grants in ancient India. In form some of the Muslim farmāns bear an astounding resemblance to Hindu

¹ Āin-i-Akbarī, tr. Blochmann, pp. 278-79.

² Al Badāʾunī, Muntakhab-ut-tawārīkh, II, tr. Lowe, p. 367.

³ Jahāngirnāmā (R. and B.), II, 181.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Āin-i-Akbarī, Jahāngirnāmā (R. and B.), I, Regulations Nos. 2, 10, pp. 8-9. Alf Muhammad Khān, Mirat-i-Ahmadī, I, 209; Khafī Khān, Muntakhab-ul-lubāb, I, 249. For some minor reforms, Jahāngirnāmā (R. and B.), I, 8, 370-71; II, 150, 151, 168. For the management of a typical rest-house at Ahmedābād, P. Della Valle, Travels, I, 95-96, 67. For a typical instance of imperial charity, Jahāngirnāmā (R. and B.), I, 440.

Tāmrapatras. Thus a Persian farmān of the emperor Jahāngir largely follows the Hindu Sanskrit style of composition.¹ It will be too much to claim that the Musalmāns borrowed all such practices and ideas from Hindus. But apart from *a priori* considerations, a comparison of the Hindu and Muslim administrative systems of the country shows that the latter, in spite of undoubtedly foreign influences in its make-up, steadily approached the old model and derived suggestions from its ever-living tradition in some tracts. In the day-to-day administrative routine, the employment of the same class of Hindu servants under Muslim rule would tend to the perpetuation of old practices. Throughout the Persian chronicles it is the Hindu Kāyasthas on whom the brunt of inferior official work falls. It will be remembered that in the post-Vardhan inscriptions, Smritis, Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī and elsewhere the same term is used to designate secretaries, clerks and petty officials in general. By the close of the ancient age the Kāyasthas had formed a class or rather a set of local classes throughout the north of India and in some parts of Gujarāt and the Deccan. It is these officers who passed, almost *en bloc*, to service under Muhammadans. They retained their old designation but they exchanged the study of Sanskrit for that of Persian. They retained their Brahmanic faith but, thanks to their environment, they were influenced by Muhammadans in matters of dress, diet, manners and culture. The Kāyastha classes now developed into a caste or rather a number of sub-castes. But whatever the social or cultural transformations which they underwent, the Kāyasthas faithfully handed down and preserved the administrative tradition which their

¹ Jahāngir's farmān is reproduced in J. B. B. R. A. S., 1920-21, pp. 419 et seq.

forefathers had fashioned.¹ At the lowest rung of the ladder the village officers were always drawn from the old classes. This personal element formed an important factor in the transmission of Hindu administrative practices.

One of the most obscure topics of Indo-Muslim administration is that of rural justice. It is clear that there

Justice. were Muslim judicial officers, Qâzis and Mir Adls in towns but neither the Persian

chronicles nor the Persian Dastûr-ul-amals, manuals of official regulations and procedure, nor the contemporary European accounts nor general literary works reveal the practices of civil adjudication in villages. The silence of our authorities, which are generally so full and detailed, indicates that the vast mass of Hindu population on the countryside was left to settle civil suits by itself according to time-honoured law and custom. This was probably one of the spheres in which old Hindu practice survived for long even outside the territories of Hindu feudatories. It would be particularly strong in tracts which, in spite of direct Muslim rule, managed largely to escape, Muslim influence. The hypothesis is borne out by the recent discovery of a Sanskrit judgment in Mithilâ.

Mithilâ in north Bihâr still forms a centre of Sanskrit learning and Brahmanic orthodoxy. Throughout the

A Sanskrit middle ages it retained its cultural judgment from Mithilâ. administrative and juridical practice. Its Hindu landowners were recognised by Muslim sovereigns

¹ Besides the inscriptions and works referred to in the foregoing chapters, some facts and traditions about Kâyasthas are given in *Brâhmanotpattimârtanda* which forms part of *Brihajjyotiṣârṇava* and in *Jwala Prasad Miśra's Jāti Bhāskara* (Venkateśvara Press, Bombay). The Kâyasthas who continued to serve the surviving Hindu principalities retained their orthodox manners on which their descendants still pride themselves.

and suffered to stick to old ways. This state of things survived the break-up of the Muslim power and lasted until the close of the eighteenth century when the East India Company had established its sway all over the lower Gangetic valley. The date on the Sanskrit Jayapatra, as a judgment was called, is equivalent to the 10th of June, 1794 A.D. As the only available document of its kind, the Jayapatra deserves notice in some detail. It comes from the village of Dharmapur which had long been held by Hindus under a Muslim imperial grant. The judgment is given and signed by Sacala Miśra who is evidently the Prāḍvivākā or chief justice referred to in the course of the document. It begins by mentioning the names of the parties and then gives the case of the plaintiff as stated in his plaint. Next the nature and substance of the defendant's answer are recapitulated. There follows a discussion as to the party on whom the burden of proof lay. The issues are determined and summarised. Next adjournments are dealt with. The plaintiff having made default, the fact that proceedings thereafter are in retrial is noted. Once the defendant objected that on principles of the Hindu law of evidence a single witness to prove a case was inadmissible. The plaintiff prays for leave to resort to the mode of proof extraordinary, or non-secular, that is, by ordeal. To this the defendant objects and cites authority in support of his contention. The judge quotes and discusses legal digests and arrives at the conclusion that the ordeal was inapplicable to the case in question. The judge and Pāṣat members refuse the request preferred by the plaintiff. Ultimately, the plaintiff is adjudged to have failed in establishing the claim preferred.¹ It is possible

¹ Jayaswal, J. B. O. R. S., March, 1920, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 246 - 58.

See also Gaṅgā Nātha Jhā, Ibid., 1921, pp. 121-2. Cf. Jolly, Ibid., 117-20, a Javanese Jayapatra. For the Hindu view of the nature of a judgment, Bṛihaspati in Parāśaramādhava, p. 150.

that old Hindu judgments were written in something like this form and that something like the procedure indicated here was followed in ancient Mithilā.

The survival of Hindu administrative practices in Medieval India had its counterpart in theory. Now, as

Medieval Hindu Political Theory.

ever, Hindu theory kept at a distance from facts but it could never lose sight of them completely. Sanskrit literature, which did not die out with the loss of Hindu independence, now concerned itself less and less with politics until it ceased to care for it at all. Though concerned primarily with literary form, commenting and explaining of old matter, custom and usage, it produced a few works which belong to the old tradition of Hindu social and political thought. The most important of them was Śukranītisāra the bulk of which was composed probably about the thirteenth century, and which, in its present shape, includes some matter as late as the 16th or even the 17th century A.D.¹ Conscious, perhaps, that he had appeared on the scene rather late, the author of Śukranīti is at pains to connect his handiwork with hoary antiquity.² He touches on all topics of government, embellishing and improving on all the details.

There is one passage in Śukra which is peculiarly valuable for the organisation of the last age of ancient India and its medieval survivals. On the basis of annual

¹ Śukranīti was edited by Gustav Oppert, Madras, 1882. The editor (Introduction, p. VIII) ascribed it to the 4th century A.D., but besides other difficulties, this hypothesis supposes the existence of guns and gunpowder in ancient India. In support of Oppert's view, see B. K. Sarkar, *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, Book II, Part I, pp. 63—71. K. P. Jayaswal places the work in the 8th century A.D. Rājendra Lāla Mitra perceived long ago that the Śukranīti could not be older than the 16th century A.D.

² Śukranīti, tr. B. K. Sarkar, pp. 1, 2, 4.

income the author divides rulers into various grades as follows :—

Designation.	Annual Revenue in Karṣas.
Sāmanta ...	1 lac to 3 lacs.
Māṇḍalika ...	3 lacs to 10 lacs.
Rāja ..	10 lacs to 20 lacs.
Mahārāja ...	20 lacs to 50 lacs.
Svarāṭ ..	50 lacs to 100 lacs.
Samrāṭ ...	1 crore to 10 crores.
Virāṭ ...	10 crores to 50 crores.
Sārvaḥḥauma ...	Universal Monarchy. ¹

On the very face of it the scheme is theoretical. Elsewhere Śukra applies some of these designations to government officers who were placed in charge of districts of various sizes.² Taken together, the passages imply that federal-feudalism was the order of the day and that vassals were often employed in high positions under the sovereign. Śukra advocates tighter control on feudatories than his predecessors in political theory had contemplated. They must be closely watched and, if they misbehaved, might be deposed or pensioned off.³

¹ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

² Ibid., 25, 27, 269.

³ Ibid., 47-48, also 52.

For the succession, the royal council, the chief officers, and other government employees, Ibid., 25, 27, 54-89, 97-8, 100-101, 269.

On the court, its seating arrangements and etiquette, Ibid., 48-51. On royal supervision over the administration, 40, 46, 51-2, 269. On the capital and council-chamber, 27-35. On communications, 34-5, 43, 184-5, 189-91, 192, 194-206, 209, 211, 213-14, 217-19, 255-56, rest-houses, 35-36. On law, justice and procedure, 134-35, 183-209. On revenue, 188, 140, 89. On expenditure, 43-4. On foreign policy, 130, 261.

The seventeenth century works like Mitra Miśra's *Vīramitrodaya* and Nīlakaṇṭha's *Nītimayūkha* discuss politics on old lines and here and there give a new turn to political ideas. But they throw no fresh light on institutions. The same remark applies to the bulky legal work, the *Nṛsiṃhaprasāda* of Dalapati, minister of

In one essential matter, the Indo-Muslim state of the Middle Ages marks a great departure from ancient practice.

A. Profound
Change.

It struck at the root of feudal-federalism and inaugurated the era of the unitary state. It is true that many Hindu principalities were allowed to subsist for long as autonomous vassals. Again, a close study of medieval India shows, what scholars have generally failed to notice, that certain epochs and regions witnessed a sort of feudalism among Musalmāns themselves. In the last years of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth, the Lodis whose dominion comprised the major part of North India, never understood the meaning of a unitary state and persisted in a sort of clan-feudalism which their ancestors on the north-western frontier had evolved. Much later in the eighteenth century, the Rohillās who dominated the north of the present United Provinces reproduced a similar type of feudalism. Nevertheless, when all allowance has been made for such exceptions, the fact remains that the Muslim state was predominantly a unitary one. The Muslim conquerors destroyed one Hindu dynasty after another, annexed its

the Nizāmshāhī ruler of Ahmednagar in the sixteenth century. Legal digests like those of Jīmūtavāhana (15th or 16th century A.D.) rarely touch administration proper. Medieval vernacular literature in the North rarely touches politics. The *Bundelōh ki Vanśāvalī* (Ohhatarpur Ms.) is one of the few exceptions. For a detailed notice, Beni Prasad, *Journal of the U. P. Historical Society*, 1922. For slight political touches in Sūtra Dāsa, the greatest of Medieval lyricists, Sūtra Sāgara, IX, 170; X, 160, 221, 1003, 2377, 2503, 2505, 2507, 2569. Similarly for Tulast Dāsa, the greatest of Hindi poets, *Rāmacaritamānasa* (Indian Press, Allāhābād edition, pp. 233, 270-71, 338, 373, 392, 399). Kṛittivāsa's Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is no better. Southern literature is much more useful for politics. For instance, the Telugu classic attributed to King Kṛṣṇādeva Rāya (1509-30 A.D.) has a number of political maxims with a bearing on practice. For a summary, Raṅgaswāmī Saraswatī, *Journal of Indian History*, January, 1926, pp. 64-77.

dominions and, for the most part, ruled them as their own. The conclusions of wars among Muslim rulers themselves meant, so far as possible, direct, downright annexation and the extermination of the defeated royal houses. Here Muslim policy was an antithesis of the Hindu tradition. As a result, the Musalmâns gave a tremendous impetus to the process of the political unification of India. The tendency, at its strongest, is represented by the Mughal empire which was founded by Bâbur in 1526 and which, with a short interregnum under Humâyûn, flourished in vigour until the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. It effectively united the north under one sceptre and for a time brought nearly the whole of the Deccan and the south under the same dominion, free from the presence of any feudatories in recently conquered territories. It is in matters other than the fundamentals of organisation that the Muslim state displays Hindu influence.

The Hindu administrative system which flourished until the 12th or 13th century A.D., and which left its influence

behind to last for many generations was almost entirely free from foreign influence in historical times. The recent discoveries

The indigenous origin of institutions.

made by the Archæological Department at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa reveal a pre-Âryan culture which bears a striking resemblance to that of Anon, Sura, Babylon and Crete, but the fact of borrowing on one side or the other has yet to be established. No administrative interaction of any kind is perceptible. It is impossible to form an idea of the pre-Âryan institutions of North India. It is probable that such as existed before the Âryan immigration were not obliterated but assimilated into the Âryan system. Indeed, on a *priori* grounds it may be argued that the older institutions, being the natural growth of climatic conditions and economic environment, would gradually grip the Âryans. As we have seen, there is an indication in Vedic

literature¹ that the development of the Âryan kingship owed something to the example of the aborigines. But after this possible fusion of Âryan and aboriginal institutions had been completed, there was, in historical times, little outside influence forthcoming to give a different turn to Hindu political development. There was, for instance, no such metamorphosis of the organs of governance in ancient India as came over Anglo-Saxon institutions with the Norman Conquest. Scholars now agree that general Greek influence on India was neither so deep nor

Greek influence on India.

so far-reaching as was once, almost naturally, supposed. Even in the case of the Hindu theatre the fact of the Greek influence, so strongly argued for by Weber,² has been denied by later writers.³ The latest surveyor of the Sanskrit Drama thus sums up the situation: "We cannot assuredly deny the possibility of Greek influence, in the sense that Weber admitted the probability; the drama or the mime, may, as played at Greek courts, have aided in the development of a true drama, but the evidence leaves only a negative answer to the search for positive signs of influence."⁴ Greek influence on the art of Gandhâra is generally admitted but its extent is still a matter of controversy. Nor is the ground any surer in regard to philosophy. The new spirit which appeared in Buddhism about the first century B.C. has been traced by Sylvain Lévi to Hellenic influences, but here, as elsewhere, the evidence is very scanty. The fact remains that the growth of ideas and cultural styles in India can be adequately explained on the basis of Indian causes. On Hindu political theory Greek influence is conspicuous by its absence. Nowhere in

¹ Supra, Ch. I.

² History of Indian Literature, p. 17.

³ Sylvain Lévi, *Théâtre Indien*, pp. 243-66.

⁴ Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 68.

the entire range of that speculation is there any such break or new turn as the impact of the virile, profound political philosophy of Greece would tend to produce. The little development which Hindu political thought displays is fully explicable on variations in the degree of secularity in different groups of compositions, on the rise of new creeds which necessitated a re-statement of the political theory attached to old religious schools and on the mutual approach of the various lines of thought thus started. In Manu and a few other writers the term Yavana is used loosely to indicate one of the hordes which lay beyond the Hindu pale. There are indeed a few isolated passages which, *prima facie*, suggest Greek influence. For instance, Aśvaghoṣa in his Saundara Nandam Kāvyaṃ remarks that some princes founded a city but discovered that if its affairs were to prosper they must have a king. So they raised to rulership one of themselves who was senior to the rest in age, discipline and accomplishments.¹ Here a city is a state, its government is elective and secular in origin. But even here is nothing essentially new to Hindu thought, nothing that could not have arisen from the impact of Buddhist philosophy on the line of thought represented by the Mahābhārata. The deeper problems with which the Greek mind grappled with lasting, amazing results—the sociality of man, the ethos of society or state, the classification of states, etc.—do not appear in Hindu political speculation. If the Greek intellectual genius, always so potent in moulding the thought of peoples, found no opportunity for making itself felt in India, it was hardly likely that the Greeks should influence Hindu government. In the domain of administrative practice the only tangible evidence of Greek influence is the Greek titles or legends on some coins and a few inscriptions. The Indo-Greek coins, however, show a rapid

¹ Saundara Nandam Kāvyaṃ, I, 7-8.

assimilation to the Hindu type. There is no evidence to support the view that the formation of big empires in India was inspired by the example of Alexander's vast dominion. As the foregoing chapters will have proved, the nature and character of Hindu empires were essentially different from those of the Macedonian regime. The latter approached the Roman model. The Hindu empire, on the other hand, was the exact antithesis of Rome which stood for rigidity and uniformity. The process of empire-building had commenced in India, after the characteristic genius of her people, long before Alexander appeared on the scene. The Mauryan empire only represented a further stage in the development. The fact is that Alexander's stay in India was far too short to cast any influence on Indian institutions. The effort of Seleucus to revive the glories of the great Macedonian empire ended in failure. The Greeks who appeared on the Indian scene after Seleucus were themselves fast losing touch with the mainsprings of Greek life. At last the rise of Parthia, one of the central events in the history of the Middle East, cut them off almost completely from the centres of Hellenism. Then the Hindu capacity for assimilating foreign elements told with decisive effect. The Indo-Greeks ceased to be Greek and became Indian. Whatever their original political ideals, they were cast aside in favour of Hindu tradition. When all the evidence on administrative practices from coins, inscriptions, literature and foreign accounts is put together, it shows nothing which was Greek in origin or which assumed its historical form under Greek influence. In a like manner the Scythians and others who entered India after the Greeks and who were rapidly Hinduised exercised little influence on the development of institutions in ancient India.

There is, however, one possible source of foreign influence which needs some examination in detail. For

centuries India maintained constant intercourse with Persia. The early literature, religion and culture of the Irânians were akin to those of the Hindus. It is more than probable that the two branches of the Âryan race had a good deal of social and political organisation in common. After their separation their environment, climatic or economic, was, of course, different but not so radically different as to give rise to fundamentally and entirely different systems of polity. Accordingly, the Persian system of administration, as reconstructed in the light of the latest researches, presents many points of affinity with the institutions examined in the foregoing chapters. It is now recognised that "the discussion as to the respective merits of democracy, oligarchy and monarchy attributed by Herodotus to Darius and his six companions after the death of Gaumata, interesting as it may be as an illustration of Greek political philosophy, is valueless for the Persian theory or practice of government."¹ Like the Hindu, the Persian monarchy was hereditary; pretenders to the Persian throne sought to pass for scions of the royal house. But the principle of primogeniture was not recognised so well in Persia as in India.² In Persia, the king's word was law, a principle which Hindu theory, wedded to Theology, would not recognise. In practice, however, the Persian and Hindu systems came near each other. The king's word in Persia was "generally determined in consultation with the Persian nobles and officials (which custom required of the king), and by regard for the usages of the country concerned. The 'royal judges,' as Herodotus calls them, or 'law-bearers' as they were probably called in Persian (*dâtabara*), advised the king what was law

¹ G. B. Gray and H. Cary, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. IV, Ch. VII, p. 184.

² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

or custom."¹ The difference with the Hindu practices lay in the large part played by the priest in the latter. In Persia "the king acted in consultation with his ministers, the heads of great departments of state, which must have existed in the capital, though of them little is directly known. . . . Certain lines of policy characteristic of the Persian government seem clear. While supreme authority resided in the king, great regard was paid, so far as the supremacy of the central authority allowed, to the traditional life and custom of the many diverse peoples gathered into the vast empire. The Persian was a tolerant government.

"Not only were the Persians prepared to be tolerant to the various religions within their empire; they went further and actively supported the temple-worship of the gods of their subjects, or contributed to the building of their temples, and conferred on priesthoods and religious institutions special privileges . . . "² *Mutatis mutandis*, this is true of the great empires which arose from time to time in ancient India.

The education of the princes in Persia is another point of resemblance with Hindu practice. "At the court of the king himself, or at the minor courts of the satraps, 'all the boys of the foremost Persians,' as Xenophon phrases it, were educated. The stress laid on old Persian habits of life and accomplishments—riding, shooting with the bow, plainness of diet, the chase—formed a counteractive to the luxury which tended to increase with the increase and increasing wealth of the empire . . . "Instruction in history and religion, attendance at judicial proceedings, familiarity with the king's methods of awarding or withholding favours, are

¹ Ibid., pp. 185-86.

² Ibid., pp. 185-87.

other elements in this education on which the Greek writers who describe it lay stress."¹ In Persia as in India there was a ruling class which supplied, "not indeed exclusively, but very largely, the generals and officers of the army, the ministers of the central administration, and the satraps and governors of provinces and districts throughout the empire."² The king's audience chamber, and the system of his correspondence and communications again are reminiscent of ancient India.³

A similar likeness is observable in the systems of provincial and local administration. The Persian empire, at least from the time of Darius, "was divided into twenty satrapies, or provinces, under satraps or governors appointed by the king; and within these large provinces there were again smaller districts under subordinate governors to whom however, at least often, the same term satrap was applied." This system indeed goes back to Cyrus and Cambyses and recalls the similar system which prevailed in the Assyrian, Median and Babylonian empires. It is indeed so natural that it developed everywhere. It is, however, interesting that the term satrap or Kṣatrapa had a long history in India. It is again instructive to read that in Persia, as in India, the local administrators were "appointed for indefinite terms, often retaining their position over a long period of years and through more than one reign."⁴ Again, like the Hindu governors, the Persian "satraps were men of high birth, . . . in some cases members of the royal family by birth or marriage."⁵ Nor is the final touch of resemblance lacking. In Persia, "these powerful administrators, as early as the reign of Darius,

¹ Ibid., p. 191.

² Ibid., p. 191.

³ Ibid., pp. 192-3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 194.

⁵ Ibid., p. 196.

showed a tendency to independence, and later the satrapic system facilitated the break-up of the empire."¹ In Persia, as in India, numerous dues were levied in cash or kind.² It may be noted that the term 'king's eye' which denoted secret agents and reporters in ancient India was applied to inspectors of local administration in Persia.³ In fundamentals there is, indeed, one great difference. Annexation was far more frequent and far more thorough in ancient Persia than in ancient India. Across the Hindu-Kush conquered princes, as a rule, were not treated so gently. Persian organisation had much less of federal-feudalism than ancient India. None the less the resemblances in the two systems of administration are striking enough. It must be borne in mind that similarity of beginnings and similarity of environment account for a good deal. But owing to the facilities of communication between the two countries and the direct, intimate touch supplied by the extension of the Persian dominion into India under Darius, the possibility of some influence cannot be ruled out. In point of time the Persian system, as all the evidence at our disposal for the two countries indicates, developed earlier than the Hindu. It is possible that the latter owed some suggestions to the former. The almost identical form of the commencement of Darius's Naqsh-e-Rustam Inscription and the Aśokan inscriptions supports the hypothesis. The prevalence of the title Kṣatrapa of Persian origin in India points the same way. Beyond this there is no direct evidence of influence but its probability is well-established.

It is only the Persian empire which lends itself to ready comparison with the ancient Hindu system. The Roman

¹ Ibid., p. 197.

² Ibid., pp. 199-200.

³ Ibid., p. 198.

Empire was built on different principles and in several respects was the antithesis of the Hindu system. Rome stood for centralisation, uniformity, rigidity, efficiency at all costs.

Comparison
with the later
Roman Empire.

The Hindu system made for localism, variety, flexibility. Only a few court and palace officers are common to the two. After the fall of 'the city on the Tiber,' the Byzantine Empire or the later Roman Empire as Bury prefers to call it, partly received Oriental influences and thus came slightly nearer the contemporary Hindu state. Even here, the difference is striking enough. The Byzantine Empire was "mainly an aggregate of cities which were originally independent states, and which still were allowed to retain enough of independence and of their municipal government to stand in their old relation of exclusiveness to one another."¹ The Hindu system had never known the city-state and treated the city almost as an accident. Again, while the aristocracy of the Roman Empire was an aristocracy of officials,² the Hindu aristocracy was based on birth as well as partly on office. None the less a few of the officers remind one of India. In the Roman Empire, "the grand chamberlain was a functionary rendered necessary by the oriental tincture, given to the imperial surroundings by the policy of Diocletian. He issued commands to all the officers connected with the palace and the emperor's person, including the count of the wardrobe, the count of the residence, the officer of the bed-room, and also to the officers of the palace bodyguard, called *Silentiarii*. His constant attendance on the person of the emperor gave this minister an opportunity of exercising a vast influence for good or evil, especially if the emperor happened, like Arcadius, to be of a weak and pliable

¹ Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, I, pp. 37-38.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-42.

disposition." Again, "the count of the sacred bounties was the lord-treasurer or chancellor of the exchequer, for the public treasury and the imperial fisc had come to be identical; while the count of the private estates managed the imperial demesnes and the Privy purse." The magister officiorum, the master of the offices, performed some miscellaneous duties. "He had control over the bureaux of imperial correspondence, over messengers despatched on imperial orders, over the soldiers on guard at the palace, over manufactories of arms . . ."¹ These arrangements recall ancient India. For the rest, the Roman and Hindu systems were so utterly divergent that chance analogies hardly count for anything.

The Hindu system of administration has not yet received adequate scientific treatment. For long it was regarded as hardly worthy of serious

Different
views on Hindu
Government.

study. More than one modern writer on Indian history has quoted with approval Gibbon's epigram that all oriental history is "one unceasing round of valour, greatness, degeneracy and decay." Relying apparently on the generalisations of some noted historians, T. H. Green laid down that "the great empires of the east are, in the main, tax-collecting institutions. They exercise coercive force on their subjects of the most violent kind, for certain purposes and at certain times, but they do not impose laws as distinct from particular and occasional commands. Nor do they judicially administer and enforce customary law."² The reaction against this attitude touched the other extreme. In a series of brilliant articles (in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, 1913), later expanded into "Hindu Polity," K. P. Jayaswal endeavoured

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

² T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, ed. Bosanquet, 1901, p. 99.

to prove that the ancient Hindu political system was one of republics, partly of the Athenian type, and of constitutional limited monarchies, not unlike that of Great Britain, with institutions like the assemblies of the Pauras or citizens and Janapadas or country-folk.¹ These organisations, as painted by Jayaswal, were more advanced than anything which modern Switzerland or the United States of America can show. The lead thus given was followed by several scholars who sought to reinforce Jayaswal's conclusions or to fill in the details of his outline. To all these attempts, however, there are a few objections. In the first place, the basis of these hypotheses is rather narrow. They rest on a very small number of passages in Hindu literature and Greek accounts and a yet smaller number of inscriptions which are more than counterbalanced by numerous other passages and inscriptions. It is these latter pieces of evidence which escaped the zealous pioneers. In the second place, the authenticity of some of the passages utilized is far from established. For instance, the Greek extracts, as given in the versions of much later writers, cannot always be taken at their face value. In the third place, the interpretation of some passages, for instance, in the *Sûtras* of Pāṇini or the work of Kātyāyana, is more than doubtful. In the fourth place, many of the conclusions in question have been reached by combining data from widely distant epochs. To discuss the evidence of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas in the same breath with that of Śukraniti is a violation of the canon of historical criticism. In like manner, to combine northern with southern and Ceylonese evidence and to draw therefrom conclusions for the whole of India is rather unscientific. In the fifth place, the connecting link in some of the arguments is lacking or extremely weak. To equate the theory

¹ Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, II, pp. 60--108.

of the procedure of the Buddhist monastic order with the practice of contemporary political assemblies, is, in the absence of definite evidence, hardly convincing. In the sixth place, the theory of the Epics, the Arthaśāstra or the Dharma Śāstras has often been taken to be an exact statement of contemporary practice. The scientific order of treatment seems to be that Hindu political theory should be extracted primarily from literature and secondarily from inscriptions but political practice should be gleaned primarily from coins and inscriptions, next from foreign accounts and, lastly, from literature. It may be added that some of the conclusions of recent writers do not harmonize with what we know with certainty about the intellectual influences, social institutions and economic conditions of ancient India. Real democracy, for instance, could not be reared on the social chasms of caste. Nor could a 'national' assembly 'of country-folk' function regularly in a large area which was split up into thousands of villages and which lacked the modern means of communications.

It may be desirable to indicate the broad generalisations which emerge from a study of the administrative data of ancient India. It is clear that in spite

Development
of Northern ad-
ministration.

of some fundamental similarities and identical details, the administrations of the North and the South develop on independent and different lines. Northern imperialism like that of the Mauryas and Guptas or southern imperialism like that of the Āndhras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas occasionally linked the political fortunes of the north and the south together but the peculiarities of the administrative system in either region were not obliterated. The most striking difference lies in the sphere of local government. The south developed regular organs of local self-government, while the north was generally content with the informal association of elders with officers. Guilds also developed more in the

south than in the north. Other divergences need not be dwelt upon here but it must be emphasised that, from the administrative point of view, the north and the south must be treated apart. Confining our view to the North, it must be admitted that here the extent of organic development is rather limited. Not only were the ancient Hindus a conservative race but they experienced little economic change which has always been so fruitful of political change in European history. After the Vedic period at any rate, the main features of economic life remain the same. We can watch the institutions of the Rîgveda—the heritage with which the Indo-Âryans started on their historical career—change under the impact of geographical factors, economic environment and social organisation. We can notice that caste gains in strength age after age and begins to dominate the structure and working of governmental institutions. We can watch the Vedic tribal assembly recede in the background and ultimately give way to the pageant of a court. We can see the average size of the state become larger and a correspondingly elaborate system of administration spring up. A large number of new offices arise, areas of local government are demarcated. At the same time a network of relationships of varying degrees of suzerainty and vassalage extends over the country. In all these spheres of development the Mauryan empire, founded about 320 B.C., marks a decisive stage. It knows nothing of popular assemblies; it has a machinery of central, provincial and district government, of fiscal and judicial administration, more elaborate than anything known to previous ages. It displays the workings of federal-feudalism on a grand scale. In another matter the Mauryan regime marks the culminating point of statecraft. The Hindu state which never recognised any limits to its scope of activity and which, off and on, concerned itself with every aspect of the

material and moral life of the people, now stood forth as a great instrument of material comfort. Above all it shone forth as a missionary state which must promote morality and righteousness all around. The ideals proclaimed by the Emperor Aśoka were not always followed by the kings who came after him but the idea of the state as the great agency of moral and spiritual welfare never disappeared from India. After the Mauryan empire Indian History enters on a period of obscurity. But the facts and inferences which can be gathered from coins, inscriptions and literature prove that the Mauryan institutions of government did not die out. When the curtain rises again, the Gupta empire displays the Mauryan institutions in a more advanced stage of development. The central officers are more numerous and more definitely posted. The administrative subdivisions are better marked out; offices like those of Bhogapatis and Viśayapatis are familiar to all. The number of taxes has also increased. The facts of federal-fendalism are recognised by all and symbolised in the gradations of titles and insignia. The Gupta empire stands at the centre of ancient Indian history. All previous history flows into it; all later history issues from it. In the development of the Sanskrit drama, classical literature, Dharma Śāstra thought and Puranic compositions, it marks the decisive epoch. Under its auspices the Hindu system of administration reaches almost the limit of organic development which it was destined to undergo in the north. After the fall of the Gupta empire, the Vardhana empire alone displays any novel features of importance. Thenceforward, organic development ceases altogether; the number of state departments or officers may increase or decrease but there is no essential change, no departure in principle or policy. In the old rut the northern administration ran for five centuries until its free independent life was extinguished by the Musalmāns. It will be observed

that, compared to Greek, Roman or English political development, the range of Hindu administrative evolution was very narrow. But it must be emphasised that besides the small amount of organic development, Hindu administrative practices show considerable variation from age to age and place to place. The foregoing chapters will have demonstrated that the structure and working of institutions, as revealed by the original authorities, was not, except in essentials, uniform over the whole of North India or throughout the ancient age. During the last few centuries for which authentic epigraphic evidence is most abundant, the administration was much less elaborate in some regions than in Kanauj, Magadha or Bengal. As part of the variety which Hindu administration shows, must be reckoned the existence of clan or tribal oligarchies. Their existence is well-attested by Jaina and Buddhist literature, by Greek accounts and by Samudragupta's Allāhābād Inscription. They did not all follow a uniform type. Negatively the absence of monarchy as commonly understood and positively, the presence of the oligarchic principle was the only common feature. An interesting passage of rather uncertain date, in the Jaina Ācārāṅga Sūtra speaks of six different kinds of polity as prevalent in north India—"arāyāṇi vā, gaṇarāyāṇi vā, juvarāyāṇi vā, dorajjāṇi vā, verajjāṇi vā, viruddharajjāṇi vā."¹ The import of the statement is not perfectly clear; the last two terms are particularly obscure; perhaps the classification proceeds as much on the basis of difference of administrative structure as of quality of administration. But one can distinguish kingless, gaṇa-ruled and two-ruled states. In any case it appears that the oligarchies differed in constitution among themselves as monarchies did. They were confined to a part of the north and disappeared altogether after the fall of the Gupta empire. It must be remembered

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, II, 3, 1, 10.

that in spite of the important difference in constitution the oligarchies formed part of the general political system, which was predominantly monarchical, of North India. For instance, the Śākya of Kapilavastu acknowledge the suzerainty of the king of Kosāla. The Ārjunāyanas, Yaudheyas and others were included in the Gupta empire.

The principles which underlay the Hindu system of governance as a whole were different from those of ancient

Principles of
Hindu govern-
ance.

Rome or modern Europe. They bear a partial resemblance to the principles of medieval European polity. The state in ancient India was not unitary in the strict sense of the term. It was saturated through and through with the principles of what for convenience may be called federalism and feudalism. It must, of course, be emphasised that the modern notions of federalism—written constitutions, clear demarcation of spheres of power, the idea of the co-ordination of federal and state authorities—were unknown to ancient India. Nor was the economic side of medieval European feudalism present in the Hindu system of organisation. These words have to be used for the sake of convenience. But when applied to ancient India they must be shorn of some of their European associations. They are only meant to imply that, as a general rule, a Hindu kingdom comprised a number of feudatories who enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy, that they themselves might have sub-feudatories of a similar status under them and so on to the third, fourth or fifth degree. A big empire was partly a series of alliances, partly a series of relationships of suzerainty and vassalage and partly an area of directly administered territory. The high-sounding Digvijaya could lead only to such a consummation on a large or small scale. The bond which held an empire together was so slight that it could be snapped at any favourable moment. Under every regime, suzerain or feudal, the village was the ultimate

unit of society. Even in the north it enjoyed a sort of social or legal autonomy, and was administered, at least from the Gupta period onwards, in consultation with village elders. Here was another type of localism. Finally, there were a number of associations and corporations, religious, economic and social, which enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. Sovereignty *de facto* was diffused among all these organisations and the influences which supported them.

Within the limits prescribed by the force of circumstances and principles of social and political organisation,

the Hindu state recognised no restrictions
on its activities. While there was much

The Scope of
State Activity.

which had been fashioned by other associations and on which the state could only set its imprimatur, the seal of its force, there was much else which it essayed to perform by means of its own resources. From time to time it elected to propagate Dharma, to inculcate and enforce morality, to maintain or improve the social order, to encourage learning, education and art, to subsidise various academies, to regulate industry and commerce, to foster agriculture, to relieve the distress from famine and calamities, to establish hospitals, rest-houses, charity-halls, etc. All this it essayed to do in addition to its primary functions of defence, order and justice. As Hindu theory emphasises times without number, the king was to be the father of the people. As the Aśokan inscriptions testify, the state was to be paternal in the widest sense of the term. *Laissez-faire* never commanded the allegiance of India. At its highest, the Hindu state was not merely a culture state but an all-pervasive moral and spiritual association. The glory of the situation was that in spite of the missionary zeal which moved its spirit at several epochs, it was generally tolerant of all forms of religious belief. A few bitter religious persecutors like Puṣyamitra and Śaśāṅka certainly flit across the stage of ancient India but, as a rule, Hindu monarchs,

even burning enthusiasts like Aśoka, tolerated all creeds, preached toleration and even went to the extent of patronising sects other than their own. It seems that metaphysical inquiries pursued for long had resulted in the rise and persistence of so many divergent schools of thought that every one was forced to adjust himself to differences and to recognise the imperative necessity of toleration.

The ideals of the Hindu state were certainly high. Its weak point was the despotic character of the hereditary monarchy. Sooner or later the sceptre

Checks on Despotism. was bound to fall into incapable, wicked or oppressive hands. The tyranny revealed in Kalhana's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* makes the flesh creep. The high-handedness of officials, particularly of those in the lowest rung, was not easy to restrain. Nevertheless there were certain checks which operated to mitigate the evils inseparable from the system. Custom could not be lightly disregarded. Following the earlier writers Śukra defines *Deśadharmā* as "custom which may or may not owe its origin to Śruti but is always followed by the people in different climes."¹ The local practices could be violated only at the risk of trouble. Religion which always had a mighty hold on ancient India was another tempering, stabilising and conservative influence in politics. The idea of *Dharma* was deeply imbedded in the Hindu mind. *Dharma*, said the *Mahābhārata*, upheld all creatures.² Even earlier, the *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad* had laid down that *Dharma* had been created by Brahman, that *Dharma* was the king of kings and that there was nothing higher than *Dharma*.³ The idea, in fact, had appeared with the Vedas. In the Vedic hymns, as Max Müller puts it, *ṛita* from meaning

¹ Śukranīti, IV, III, 64.

² *Mahābhārata*, Śānti Parvan, CIX, 8-13.

³ *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, I, 4, 11-14.

the order of the heavenly bodies became in time the name for moral order and righteousness.¹ It sustained the world.² From the Brâhmanas the idea of Dharma passed to Buddhists. "Dharma is not simply law," says Rhys Davids speaking of Buddhism, "but that which underlies and includes the law—a word often most difficult to translate and best rendered by truth or righteousness."³ Mrs. Rhys Davids explained it as the normal, necessary, eternal order and law of all moral and spiritual things.⁴ The Jainas always define Dharma so as to include the law of inanimate matter. The Hindu view of Dharma as the foundation of order and, therefore, transcending all merely human authority could not fail to exercise some influence on rulers and to serve as a check on the passive loyalty of the people. Besides these moral checks there were what may be called the checks of expediency or enlightened self-interest. Princes who were often anxious to extend their dominions and who were always liable to aggression from neighbouring states must, for purposes of effective defence and offence alike, keep their subjects contented and well-disposed. In his discussion of foreign policy Kautalya emphasises that a king desirous of conquests should keep his subjects well-pleased lest they should be won over by the enemy. The presence of feudatories, ever ready to strike a blow for independence, was another check of expediency on a king. With his own subjects disaffected, a suzerain would hardly be able to control his feudatories. Lastly, the Hindu monarchy, like every other despotism, was tempered by assassination and insurrection. This explains the extraordinary severity of the law of treason in ancient India.

¹ Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1878, p. 235.

² Cf. *Mahâbhârata*, *Karṇa Parvan*, CXIX, 59; *Manu*, IV, 176; *Matsya Purâṇa*, CXLV, 27; CCXLI, 3, 4.

³ Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 45.

⁴ Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 55.

The Hindu state was never a theocracy. The occasional appearance of Brahmanic ruling dynasties was a mere accident like the existence of Vaiśya and Śūdra dynasties. As a rule, the sceptre was wielded by Kṣatriyas or those who were fictitiously recognised as Kṣatriyas.¹ The inscriptions and the foreign accounts indicate that the extreme Brahmanic claims, set forth in the Dharma Sūtras, Dharma Śāstras and Purāṇas, were not fully conceded in practice. The privileges which Brāhmaṇas did actually enjoy in practice were seriously curtailed under Buddhist and Jaina regimes. Nevertheless the Hindu state, though not a theocracy, was often influenced by the Brāhmaṇas, who posed as the depositories of learning, law and religion. The Purohita was always beside the king. Brāhmaṇas supplied many counsellors, judges and other officials. Doubtful points of law were often referred to Brāhmaṇa pariśads. The state recognised the facts of caste and sat rather hard on the lower classes. Apart from the evidence of the theoretical Dharma Sūtras, Dharma Śāstras, Arthaśāstras and Purāṇas, Alberūni testifies to the disabilities imposed on Śūdras in the matter of justice and all that pertains to the higher life of man. The inscriptions show that most of the grants of land or presents of money and articles were made to Brāhmaṇas. Suzerains or feudatories, in the north or south, when addressing their subjects through inscriptions, begin by mentioning the Brāhmaṇas and thus recognise their social primacy. Forced labour, which is alluded to in so many inscriptions, must have fallen on the lower classes. It is from the dominance of caste that Hindu administration

¹ For alleged early contests between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas for supremacy (Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Part I, Ch. III) there is no tangible evidence. No safe inference can be drawn from the myths of Paraśu Rāma's extermination of Kṣatriyas in the Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata (Ādi Parvan, LXIV).

draws its darkest stain. In spite of its anxiety to promote morality and righteousness, it was alien to all ideas of democracy, of equality or equal opportunity. The influence of caste on administration is clear from authentic records. It is worth while inquiring how far the state in its turn influenced the development of caste. Buddhist and Jaina kings would naturally reduce its political significance, though nothing could obliterate it. Foreign or mixed tribes and clans which possessed themselves of political authority got installed as Kṣatriyas and thus affected the old order. Some rulers claim in their inscriptions that they actually enforced the rules of caste.¹ If so, such action would promote the tendency of the community to split into innumerable sub-castes. The size of a principality, whether that of a suzerain or a feudatory, was usually small. A ruling of the state on a matter of caste would operate over a restricted area and thus differentiate one group of a widespread caste from all others. In course of time they would be permanently disunited. Government servants of various grades would come to form classes of their own; classes which, after the Hindu fashion, would develop into castes. Kāyasthas, already referred to, furnish an example. More direct means might sometimes be employed. Sir William Hunter has recorded the tradition that certain rulers of Orissâ, finding themselves in need of more Brâhmanas than existed in their dominions, promoted whole groups to Brâhmanahood. As the old Brâhmanas refused to admit the new ones to commensality and intermarriage, the latter formed themselves into new castes. The Jaina tradition recorded in the Âdi Purâṇa that King Bharata, son of the first Tirthakara Rṣabha, created Jaina Brâhmanas out of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śûdras is suggestive. The Râjas of Chambâ are said to have bestowed on some

¹ See, for instance, Ep. Ind., I, No. 45.

people the right to wear the sacred thread in return for gifts and services. Alberŭni has preserved a tradition that "the kings of antiquity who were industriously devoted to the duties of their office, spent most of their care on the divisions of their subjects into different classes and orders, which they tried to preserve from inter-mixture and disorder. They did not allow anybody to transgress the limits of his class, and even punished those who would not be content with their class."¹ The statement cannot be taken at its face value but it does seem to indicate that governmental action had something to do with the development and maintenance of the system of castes and sub-castes. For later times Tod reports the tradition of a Rājput prince who regulated the dress of all even to the tie of a turban and who would thus accentuate the outward distinctions of caste.

A few salient features of the Hindu administrative structure may be briefly touched upon. Ancient India

Aspects of the
Administration.

had no perception of the necessity or desirability of separation of functions.

The same men wielded civil and military authority at the same time. There were, indeed, judges who were nothing else but in addition to them high executive officers performed judicial duties. Any capable officials might be appointed ambassadors. Aśoka entrusted missionary and censorial work partly to ordinary officers of state.

The organisation of departments under superintendents with a regular secretarial and other staff and all grouped under different ministers is one of the striking features of the Hindu system. It is under this head that the administration displays the greatest amount of development. Kalhana speaks of successive increases in the number of portfolios, superintendents and ministers in Kashmir.

¹ Alberŭni, India, tr. Sachau, I, pp. 99-100.

A comparative study of the inscriptions reveals the fact that the number of officers steadily increased in the north with the lapse of time until the last age presented the greatest number of them. Of the status of ministers, who next to the king, formed the highest rung of the official ladder, enough has been said before with reference to various epochs and regions. But it may be emphasised here that, though creatures of the king, they occupied a position of the highest dignity and responsibility. As the Jûnâgaḍh Inscription of Rudradâman shows, they sometimes dared to oppose the king. Somadeva Sûri lays down that one of the essential features of ministership was that the king should be afraid of ministers.

The division of a territory into provinces, districts and even lower administrative areas is another noticeable feature of the Hindu system at least from the Mauryan period onwards. Some of the provinces were governed by princes of the blood and others by men drawn from a sort of ruling class. The tenures of offices were generally long. The employment of feudatories in high office, the practice of payment through grants of land, the occasional hereditary transmission of offices and the practical restriction of all high offices to a small class gave a deep feudal tinge to the whole administration. But that was only part of the order of the day. So long as the central power was not assailed by enemies and was wielded by capable hands, it could make itself felt.

The position of the village as the lowest unit of administration need not be discussed again. But it may be emphasised that a village would naturally tend to develop a consciousness of its own. The ancient Hindu village bore some resemblance to that of China, Indo-China and Siam. The functional organisation, typified by the guild, could not have the same fixity and permanence or the same keen sense of autonomy. Nevertheless, as the inscriptions,

coins, seals and literature alike prove, the guild became a real factor in the economic life of the community and appropriated some social and judicial functions. Add to all this the numerous castes and sub-castes with customs and usages of their own and it is clear that Hindu government, in the widest sense of regulation, was essentially a pluralistic one. The whole Hindu system of social and political organisation seems to have developed concurrently on the bases of race, occupation and region. There could be no question of unified loyalty and allegiance. Social development had been multilinear. Loyalty, like sovereignty, was split up. In the multitude of associations and organisations, the task of the state was (1) to secure and maintain those conditions of life in which each group could express itself in the best and fullest manner and without detriment to the rest and (2) to adopt all direct means for the furtherance of popular good and happiness.

How far the Hindu state succeeded in this task is a question difficult to answer in the lamentable absence of adequate data. Nor is a single judgment possible. Owing to the vicissitudes of Indian history, each region and epoch should be discussed by itself. But for that there is not sufficient material. Taking a broad, comprehensive view, it is not possible to make any unqualified statement on the achievements of the Hindu state. It must be admitted that the despotism could occasionally lead to oppression, sometimes severe, even diabolical. Not to speak of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī, Nāgasena remarks in Milinda-Pañha that "some people have left the world at the tyranny of kings."¹ The personal expenditure of princes, the heavy bill of the palace, the pomp and pageantry of the court, and frequent wars are likely to have told grievously

The failure
and success of
the Hindu State.

¹ Milinda Pañha, II, 1, 6. See also IV, 22.

on the tax-payer—on the poor peasant, artisan or labourer. The Hindu state sanctioned too many tolls and petty dues and too much forced labour. It failed signally to reclaim the tribes on the frontiers or in the centre of India. It fell a victim to caste and deliberately refused to bring the lower classes into line with the rest of Hindu society or to encourage their higher life. It allied itself with priestcraft and conservatism and helped perpetuate the distinctions between man and man. Lastly, the Hindu state, parochial, shortsighted and isolated from the rest of the world, failed to keep abreast of the times and to organise the resources of the country against successive foreign invasions. At last in the thirteenth century it shipwrecked in the storms it was incapable of weathering.

On the other hand, the Hindu state was generally alive to some vital interests of the people. It encouraged agriculture and looked after irrigation. It stepped in to save the consumer from exorbitant profiteering and allowed all classes of craftsmen to band together. It cared for the means of communication and had no small share in promoting the homogeneity of culture throughout the country. The rulers often provided for the comforts of travellers and sick people and showed unstinted generosity to the poor people. The Hindu courts favoured poets and scholars and endowed academies and veritable universities which won the enthusiastic admiration of great Chinese scholars. The Hindu state succeeded in maintaining conditions favourable to the rise of systems of philosophy which still command respect, religions which, in certain aspects, touch the sublimest heights, and a literature which ranks among the great literatures of the world. Sometimes the state directly took the lead in moral and religious reform. Under Aśoka and Kaniṣka it helped transform the higher life of India and transmitted to the Far East a gospel which still warms and illumines its spiritual life.

forefathers had fashioned.¹ At the lowest rung of the ladder the village officers were always drawn from the old classes. This personal element formed an important factor in the transmission of Hindu administrative practices.

One of the most obscure topics of Indo-Muslim administration is that of rural justice. It is clear that there were Muslim judicial officers, Qâzis and Mir Adls in towns but neither the Persian

chronicles nor the Persian *Dastûr-ul-amals*, manuals of official regulations and procedure, nor the contemporary European accounts nor general literary works reveal the practices of civil adjudication in villages. The silence of our authorities, which are generally so full and detailed, indicates that the vast mass of Hindu population on the countryside was left to settle civil suits by itself according to time-honoured law and custom. This was probably one of the spheres in which old Hindu practice survived for long even outside the territories of Hindu feudatories. It would be particularly strong in tracts which, in spite of direct Muslim rule, managed largely to escape, Muslim influence. The hypothesis is borne out by the recent discovery of a Sanskrit judgment in Mithilâ.

Mithilâ in north Bihâr still forms a centre of Sanskrit learning and Brahmanic orthodoxy. Throughout the middle ages it retained its cultural autonomy and, partly, its freedom of administrative and juridical practice. Its Hindu landowners were recognised by Muslim sovereigns

¹ Besides the inscriptions and works referred to in the foregoing chapters, some facts and traditions about Kâyasthas are given in *Brâhmanotpattimârtanda* which forms part of *Bṛhajjyotiṣârṇava* and in *Jwala Prasad Mîtra's Jâti Bhâskara* (Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay). The Kâyasthas who continued to serve the surviving Hindu principalities retained their orthodox manners on which their descendants still pride themselves.

and suffered to stick to old ways. This state of things survived the break-up of the Muslim power and lasted until the close of the eighteenth century when the East India Company had established its sway all over the lower Gangetic valley. The date on the Sanskrit Jayapatra, as a judgment was called, is equivalent to the 10th of June, 1794 A.D. As the only available document of its kind, the Jayapatra deserves notice in some detail. It comes from the village of Dharmapur which had long been held by Hindus under a Muslim imperial grant. The judgment is given and signed by Sacala Miśra who is evidently the Prāḍvivākā or chief justice referred to in the course of the document. It begins by mentioning the names of the parties and then gives the case of the plaintiff as stated in his plaint. Next the nature and substance of the defendant's answer are recapitulated. There follows a discussion as to the party on whom the burden of proof lay. The issues are determined and summarised. Next adjournments are dealt with. The plaintiff having made default, the fact that proceedings thereafter are in retrial is noted. Once the defendant objected that on principles of the Hindu law of evidence a single witness to prove a case was inadmissible. The plaintiff prays for leave to resort to the mode of proof extraordinary, or non-secular, that is, by ordeal. To this the defendant objects and cites authority in support of his contention. The judge quotes and discusses legal digests and arrives at the conclusion that the ordeal was inapplicable to the case in question. The judge and Pāṣat members refuse the request preferred by the plaintiff. Ultimately, the plaintiff is adjudged to have failed in establishing the claim preferred.¹ It is possible

¹ Jayaswal, J. B. O. R. S., March, 1920, Vol. VI, Part I, pp. 246 - 58.

See also Gaṅgā Nātha Jhā, *Ibid.*, 1921, pp. 121-2. Cf. Jolly, *Ibid.*, 117-20, a Javanese Jayapatra. For the Hindu view of the nature of a judgment, Bṛihaspati in *Parāśaramādhava*, p. 150.

that old Hindu judgments were written in something like this form and that something like the procedure indicated here was followed in ancient Mithilā.

The survival of Hindu administrative practices in Medieval India had its counterpart in theory. Now, as

Medieval Hindu Political Theory. ever, Hindu theory kept at a distance from facts but it could never lose sight of them completely. Sanskrit literature,

which did not die out with the loss of Hindu independence, now concerned itself less and less with politics until it ceased to care for it at all. Though concerned primarily with literary form, commenting and explaining of old matter, custom and usage, it produced a few works which belong to the old tradition of Hindu social and political thought. The most important of them was Śukranītisāra the bulk of which was composed probably about the thirteenth century, and which, in its present shape, includes some matter as late as the 16th or even the 17th century A.D.¹ Conscious, perhaps, that he had appeared on the scene rather late, the author of Śukranīti is at pains to connect his handiwork with hoary antiquity.² He touches on all topics of government, embellishing and improving on all the details.

There is one passage in Śukra which is peculiarly valuable for the organisation of the last age of ancient India and its medieval survivals. On the basis of annual

¹ Śukranīti was edited by Gustav Oppert, Madras, 1882. The editor (Introduction, p. VIII) ascribed it to the 4th century A.D., but besides other difficulties, this hypothesis supposes the existence of guns and gunpowder in ancient India. In support of Oppert's view, see B. K. Sarkar, *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*. Book II, Part I, pp. 68-71. K. P. Jayaswal places the work in the 8th century A.D. Rājendra Lāla Mitra perceived long ago that the Śukranīti could not be older than the 16th century A.D.

² Śukranīti, tr. B. K. Sarkar, pp. 1, 2, 4.

income the author divides rulers into various grades as follows :—

Designation.	Annual Revenue in Kāṣas.
Sāmanta 1 lac to 3 lacs.
Māṇḍalika 3 lacs to 10 lacs.
Rāja 10 lacs to 20 lacs.
Mahārāja 20 lacs to 50 lacs.
Svarāṭh 50 lacs to 100 lacs.
Samrāṭh 1 crore to 10 crores.
Virāṭh 10 crores to 50 crores.
Sārvabhauma Universal Monarchy. ¹

On the very face of it the scheme is theoretical. Elsewhere Śukra applies some of these designations to government officers who were placed in charge of districts of various sizes.² Taken together, the passages imply that federal-feudalism was the order of the day and that vassals were often employed in high positions under the sovereign. Śukra advocates tighter control on feudatories than his predecessors in political theory had contemplated. They must be closely watched and, if they misbehaved, might be deposed or pensioned off.³

¹ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

² Ibid., 25, 27, 269.

³ Ibid., 47-48, also 52.

For the succession, the royal council, the chief officers, and other government employees, Ibid., 25, 27, 54—89, 97-8, 100-101, 269.

On the court, its seating arrangements and etiquette, Ibid., 48—51. On royal supervision over the administration, 40, 46, 51-2, 269. On the capital and council-chamber, 27-35. On communications, 34-5, 43, 184-5, 189—91, 192, 194—206, 209, 211, 213-14, 217--19, 255-56. rest-houses, 35-36. On law, justice and procedure, 134-35, 183—209. On revenue, 138, 140, 89. On expenditure, 43-4. On foreign policy, 130, 261.

The seventeenth century works like Mītra Mīśra's Vīramitrodaya and Nīlakaṇṭha's Nītimayūkha discuss politics on old lines and here and there give a new turn to political ideas. But they throw no fresh light on institutions. The same remark applies to the bulky legal work, the Nṛsīmhaprasāda of Dalapati, minister of

In one essential matter, the Indo-Muslim state of the Middle Ages marks a great departure from ancient practice.

A Profound Change. It struck at the root of feudal-federalism and inaugurated the era of the unitary

state. It is true that many Hindu principalities were allowed to subsist for long as autonomous vassals. Again, a close study of medieval India shows, what scholars have generally failed to notice, that certain epochs and regions witnessed a sort of feudalism among Musalmāns themselves. In the last years of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth, the Lodis whose dominion comprised the major part of North India, never understood the meaning of a unitary state and persisted in a sort of clan-feudalism which their ancestors on the north-western frontier had evolved. Much later in the eighteenth century, the Rohillās who dominated the north of the present United Provinces reproduced a similar type of feudalism. Nevertheless, when all allowance has been made for such exceptions, the fact remains that the Muslim state was predominantly a unitary one. The Muslim conquerors destroyed one Hindu dynasty after another, annexed its

the Nizāmshāhī ruler of Ahmednagar in the sixteenth century. Legal digests like those of *Jīmūtarāhāna* (15th or 16th century A.D.) rarely touch administration proper. Medieval vernacular literature in the North rarely touches politics. The *Bundeloh ki Vamśāvalī* (Ohhatarpur Ms.) is one of the few exceptions. For a detailed notice, Beni Prasad, *Journal of the U. P. Historical Society*, 1922. For slight political touches in *Sūra Dāsa*, the greatest of Medieval lyricists, *Sūra Sāgara*, IX, 170; X, 160, 221, 1003, 2377, 2503, 2505, 2507, 2569. Similarly for Tulasī Dāsa, the greatest of Hindi poets, *Rāmacaritamānasa* (Indian Press, Allāhābād edition, pp. 233, 270-71, 333, 373, 392, 399). Krittivāsa's Bengali version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is no better. Southern literature is much more useful for politics. For instance, the Telugu classic attributed to King Kṛṣṇādeva Rāya (1509-30 A.D.) has a number of political maxims with a bearing on practice. For a summary, Raṅgaswāmī Saraswatī, *Journal of Indian History*, January, 1926, pp. 64-77.

dominions and, for the most part, ruled them as their own. The conclusions of wars among Muslim rulers themselves meant, so far as possible, direct, downright annexation and the extermination of the defeated royal houses. Here Muslim policy was an antithesis of the Hindu tradition. As a result, the Musalmâns gave a tremendous impetus to the process of the political unification of India. The tendency, at its strongest, is represented by the Mughal empire which was founded by Bâbur in 1526 and which, with a short interregnum under Humâyûn, flourished in vigour until the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. It effectively united the north under one sceptre and for a time brought nearly the whole of the Deccan and the south under the same dominion, free from the presence of any feudatories in recently conquered territories. It is in matters other than the fundamentals of organisation that the Muslim state displays Hindu influence.

The Hindu administrative system which flourished until the 12th or 13th century A.D., and which left its influence

behind to last for many generations was almost entirely free from foreign influence in historical times. The recent discoveries

The indigenous origin of institutions. made by the Archaeological Department at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa reveal a pre-Âryan culture which bears a striking resemblance to that of Anon, Sura, Babylon and Crete, but the fact of borrowing on one side or the other has yet to be established. No administrative interaction of any kind is perceptible. It is impossible to form an idea of the pre-Âryan institutions of North India. It is probable that such as existed before the Âryan immigration were not obliterated but assimilated into the Âryan system. Indeed, on *a priori* grounds it may be argued that the older institutions, being the natural growth of climatic conditions and economic environment, would gradually grip the Âryans. As we have seen, there is an indication in Vedic

literature¹ that the development of the Âryan kingship owed something to the example of the aborigines. But after this possible fusion of Âryan and aboriginal institutions had been completed, there was, in historical times, little outside influence forthcoming to give a different turn to Hindu political development. There was, for instance, no such metamorphosis of the organs of governance in ancient India as came over Anglo-Saxon institutions with the Norman Conquest. Scholars now agree that general Greek influence on India was neither so deep nor

Greek influence on India,

so far-reaching as was once, almost naturally, supposed. Even in the case of the

Hindu theatre the fact of the Greek influence, so strongly argued for by Weber,² has been denied by later writers.³ The latest surveyor of the Sanskrit Drama thus sums up the situation: "We cannot assuredly deny the possibility of Greek influence, in the sense that Weber admitted the probability; the drama or the mime, may, as played at Greek courts, have aided in the development of a true drama, but the evidence leaves only a negative answer to the search for positive signs of influence."⁴ Greek influence on the art of Gandhâra is generally admitted but its extent is still a matter of controversy. Nor is the ground any surer in regard to philosophy. The new spirit which appeared in Buddhism about the first century B.C. has been traced by Sylvain Lévi to Hellenic influences, but here, as elsewhere, the evidence is very scanty. The fact remains that the growth of ideas and cultural styles in India can be adequately explained on the basis of Indian causes. On Hindu political theory Greek influence is conspicuous by its absence. Nowhere in

¹ *Supra*, Ch. I.

² *History of Indian Literature*, p. 17.

³ Sylvain Lévi, *Théâtre Indien*, pp. 243-66.

⁴ Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 68.

the entire range of that speculation is there any such break or new turn as the impact of the virile, profound political philosophy of Greece would tend to produce. The little development which Hindu political thought displays is fully explicable on variations in the degree of secularity in different groups of compositions, on the rise of new creeds which necessitated a re-statement of the political theory attached to old religious schools and on the mutual approach of the various lines of thought thus started. In Manu and a few other writers the term Yavana is used loosely to indicate one of the hordes which lay beyond the Hindu pale. There are indeed a few isolated passages which, *prima facie*, suggest Greek influence. For instance, Āśvaghoṣa in his Saundara Nandam Kāvyaṃ remarks that some princes founded a city but discovered that if its affairs were to prosper they must have a king. So they raised to rulership one of themselves who was senior to the rest in age, discipline and accomplishments.¹ Here a city is a state, its government is elective and secular in origin. But even here is nothing essentially new to Hindu thought, nothing that could not have arisen from the impact of Buddhist philosophy on the line of thought represented by the Mahābhārata. The deeper problems with which the Greek mind grappled with lasting, amazing results—the sociality of man, the ethos of society or state, the classification of states, etc.—do not appear in Hindu political speculation. If the Greek intellectual genius, always so potent in moulding the thought of peoples, found no opportunity for making itself felt in India, it was hardly likely that the Greeks should influence Hindu government. In the domain of administrative practice the only tangible evidence of Greek influence is the Greek titles or legends on some coins and a few inscriptions. The Indo-Greek coins, however, show a rapid

¹ Saundara Nandam Kāvyaṃ, I, 7-8.

assimilation to the Hindu type. There is no evidence to support the view that the formation of big empires in India was inspired by the example of Alexander's vast dominion. As the foregoing chapters will have proved, the nature and character of Hindu empires were essentially different from those of the Macedonian regime. The latter approached the Roman model. The Hindu empire, on the other hand, was the exact antithesis of Rome which stood for rigidity and uniformity. The process of empire-building had commenced in India, after the characteristic genius of her people, long before Alexander appeared on the scene. The Mauryan empire only represented a further stage in the development. The fact is that Alexander's stay in India was far too short to cast any influence on Indian institutions. The effort of Seleucus to revive the glories of the great Macedonian empire ended in failure. The Greeks who appeared on the Indian scene after Seleucus were themselves fast losing touch with the mainsprings of Greek life. At last the rise of Parthia, one of the central events in the history of the Middle East, cut them off almost completely from the centres of Hellenism. Then the Hindu capacity for assimilating foreign elements told with decisive effect. The Indo-Greeks ceased to be Greek and became Indian. Whatever their original political ideals, they were cast aside in favour of Hindu tradition. When all the evidence on administrative practices from coins, inscriptions, literature and foreign accounts is put together, it shows nothing which was Greek in origin or which assumed its historical form under Greek influence. In a like manner the Scythians and others who entered India after the Greeks and who were rapidly Hinduised exercised little influence on the development of institutions in ancient India.

There is, however, one possible source of foreign influence which needs some examination in detail. For

centuries India maintained constant intercourse with Persia. The early literature, religion and culture of the Irânians were akin to those of the Hindus. It is more than probable that the two branches of the Âryan race had a good deal of social and political organisation in common. After their separation their environment, climatic or economic, was, of course, different but not so radically different as to give rise to fundamentally and entirely different systems of polity. Accordingly, the Persian system of administration, as reconstructed in the light of the latest researches, presents many points of affinity with the institutions examined in the foregoing chapters. It is now recognised that "the discussion as to the respective merits of democracy, oligarchy and monarchy attributed by Herodotus to Darius and his six companions after the death of Gaumata, interesting as it may be as an illustration of Greek political philosophy, is valueless for the Persian theory or practice of government."¹ Like the Hindu, the Persian monarchy was hereditary; pretenders to the Persian throne sought to pass for scions of the royal house. But the principle of primogeniture was not recognised so well in Persia as in India.² In Persia, the king's word was law, a principle which Hindu theory, wedded to Theology, would not recognise. In practice, however, the Persian and Hindu systems came near each other. The king's word in Persia was "generally determined in consultation with the Persian nobles and officials (which custom required of the king), and by regard for the usages of the country concerned. The 'royal judges,' as Herodotus calls them, or 'law-bearers' as they were probably called in Persian (*dâtabara*), advised the king what was law

¹ G. B. Gray and H. Cary, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. IV, Ch. VII, p. 184.

² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

or custom."¹ The difference with the Hindu practices lay in the large part played by the priest in the latter. In Persia "the king acted in consultation with his ministers, the heads of great departments of state, which must have existed in the capital, though of them little is directly known. . . . Certain lines of policy characteristic of the Persian government seem clear. While supreme authority resided in the king, great regard was paid, so far as the supremacy of the central authority allowed, to the traditional life and custom of the many diverse peoples gathered into the vast empire. The Persian was a tolerant government.

"Not only were the Persians prepared to be tolerant to the various religions within their empire; they went further and actively supported the temple-worship of the gods of their subjects, or contributed to the building of their temples, and conferred on priesthoods and religious institutions special privileges . . . "² *Mutatis mutandis*, this is true of the great empires which arose from time to time in ancient India.

The education of the princes in Persia is another point of resemblance with Hindu practice. "At the court of the king himself, or at the minor courts of the satraps, 'all the boys of the foremost Persians,' as Xenophon phrases it, were educated. The stress laid on old Persian habits of life and accomplishments—riding, shooting with the bow, plainness of diet, the chase—formed a counteractive to the luxury which tended to increase with the increase and increasing wealth of the empire . . . "Instruction in history and religion, attendance at judicial proceedings, familiarity with the king's methods of awarding or withholding favours, are

¹ Ibid., pp. 185-86.

² Ibid., pp. 185-87.

other elements in this education on which the Greek writers who describe it lay stress."¹ In Persia as in India there was a ruling class which supplied, "not indeed exclusively, but very largely, the generals and officers of the army, the ministers of the central administration, and the satraps and governors of provinces and districts throughout the empire."² The king's audience chamber, and the system of his correspondence and communications again are reminiscent of ancient India.³

A similar likeness is observable in the systems of provincial and local administration. The Persian empire, at least from the time of Darius, "was divided into twenty satrapies, or provinces, under satraps or governors appointed by the king; and within these large provinces there were again smaller districts under subordinate governors to whom however, at least often, the same term satrap was applied." This system indeed goes back to Cyrus and Cambyzes and recalls the similar system which prevailed in the Assyrian, Median and Babylonian empires. It is indeed so natural that it developed everywhere. It is, however, interesting that the term satrap or Kṣatrapa had a long history in India. It is again instructive to read that in Persia, as in India, the local administrators were "appointed for indefinite terms, often retaining their position over a long period of years and through more than one reign."⁴ Again, like the Hindu governors, the Persian "satraps were men of high birth, . . . in some cases members of the royal family by birth or marriage."⁵ Nor is the final touch of resemblance lacking. In Persia, "these powerful administrators, as early as the reign of Darius,

¹ Ibid., p. 191.

² Ibid., p. 191.

³ Ibid., pp. 192-3.

⁴ Ibid., p. 194.

⁵ Ibid., p. 196.

showed a tendency to independence, and later the satrapic system facilitated the break-up of the empire."¹ In Persia, as in India, numerous dues were levied in cash or kind.² It may be noted that the term 'king's eye' which denoted secret agents and reporters in ancient India was applied to inspectors of local administration in Persia.³ In fundamentals there is, indeed, one great difference. Annexation was far more frequent and far more thorough in ancient Persia than in ancient India. Across the Hindu-Kush conquered princes, as a rule, were not treated so gently. Persian organisation had much less of federal-feudalism than ancient India. None the less the resemblances in the two systems of administration are striking enough. It must be borne in mind that similarity of beginnings and similarity of environment account for a good deal. But owing to the facilities of communication between the two countries and the direct, intimate touch supplied by the extension of the Persian dominion into India under Darius, the possibility of some influence cannot be ruled out. In point of time the Persian system, as all the evidence at our disposal for the two countries indicates, developed earlier than the Hindu. It is possible that the latter owed some suggestions to the former. The almost identical form of the commencement of Darius's Naqsh-i-Rustam Inscription and the Aśokan inscriptions supports the hypothesis. The prevalence of the title Kṣatrapa of Persian origin in India points the same way. Beyond this there is no direct evidence of influence but its probability is well-established.

It is only the Persian empire which lends itself to ready comparison with the ancient Hindu system. The Roman

¹ Ibid., p. 197.

² Ibid., pp. 199-200.

³ Ibid., p. 198.

Empire was built on different principles and in several respects was the antithesis of the Hindu

Comparison
with the later
Roman Empire.

system. Rome stood for centralisation, uniformity, rigidity, efficiency at all costs.

The Hindu system made for localism, variety, flexibility. Only a few court and palace officers are common to the two. After the fall of 'the city on the Tiber,' the Byzantine Empire or the later Roman Empire as Bury prefers to call it, partly received Oriental influences and thus came slightly nearer the contemporary Hindu state. Even here, the difference is striking enough. The Byzantine Empire was "mainly an aggregate of cities which were originally independent states, and which still were allowed to retain enough of independence and of their municipal government to stand in their old relation of exclusiveness to one another."¹ The Hindu system had never known the city-state and treated the city almost as an accident. Again, while the aristocracy of the Roman Empire was an aristocracy of officials,² the Hindu aristocracy was based on birth as well as partly on office. None the less a few of the officers remind one of India. In the Roman Empire, "the grand chamberlain was a functionary rendered necessary by the oriental tincture, given to the imperial surroundings by the policy of Diocletian. He issued commands to all the officers connected with the palace and the emperor's person, including the count of the wardrobe, the count of the residence, the officer of the bed-room, and also to the officers of the palace bodyguard, called *Silentiarii*. His constant attendance on the person of the emperor gave this minister an opportunity of exercising a vast influence for good or evil, especially if the emperor happened, like Arcadius, to be of a weak and pliable

¹ Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, I, pp. 37-38.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-42.

disposition." Again, "the count of the sacred bounties was the lord-treasurer or chancellor of the exchequer, for the public treasury and the imperial fisc had come to be identical; while the count of the private estates managed the imperial demesnes and the Privy purse." The magister officiorum, the master of the offices, performed some miscellaneous duties. "He had control over the bureaux of imperial correspondence, over messengers despatched on imperial orders, over the soldiers on guard at the palace, over manufactories of arms . . ."¹ These arrangements recall ancient India. For the rest, the Roman and Hindu systems were so utterly divergent that chance analogies hardly count for anything.

The Hindu system of administration has not yet received adequate scientific treatment. For long it was

Different
views on Hindu
Government.

regarded as hardly worthy of serious study. More than one modern writer on Indian history has quoted with approval Gibbon's epigram that all oriental history

is "one unceasing round of valour, greatness, degeneracy and decay." Relying apparently on the generalisations of some noted historians, T. H. Green laid down that "the great empires of the east are, in the main, tax-collecting institutions. They exercise coercive force on their subjects of the most violent kind, for certain purposes and at certain times, but they do not impose laws as distinct from particular and occasional commands. Nor do they judicially administer and enforce customary law."² The reaction against this attitude touched the other extreme. In a series of brilliant articles (in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, 1913), later expanded into "Hindu Polity," K. P. Jayaswal endeavoured

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

² T. H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation*, ed. Bosanquet, 1901, p. 99.

to prove that the ancient Hindu political system was one of republics, partly of the Athenian type, and of constitutional limited monarchies, not unlike that of Great Britain, with institutions like the assemblies of the Pauras or citizens and Janapadas or country-folk.¹ These organisations, as painted by Jayaswal, were more advanced than anything which modern Switzerland or the United States of America can show. The lead thus given was followed by several scholars who sought to reinforce Jayaswal's conclusions or to fill in the details of his outline. To all these attempts, however, there are a few objections. In the first place, the basis of these hypotheses is rather narrow. They rest on a very small number of passages in Hindu literature and Greek accounts and a yet smaller number of inscriptions which are more than counterbalanced by numerous other passages and inscriptions. It is these latter pieces of evidence which escaped the zealous pioneers. In the second place, the authenticity of some of the passages utilized is far from established. For instance, the Greek extracts, as given in the versions of much later writers, cannot always be taken at their face value. In the third place, the interpretation of some passages, for instance, in the Sûtras of Pāṇini or the work of Kātyāyana, is more than doubtful. In the fourth place, many of the conclusions in question have been reached by combining data from widely distant epochs. To discuss the evidence of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas in the same breath with that of Śukraniti is a violation of the canon of historical criticism. In like manner, to combine northern with southern and Ceylonese evidence and to draw therefrom conclusions for the whole of India is rather unscientific. In the fifth place, the connecting link in some of the arguments is lacking or extremely weak. To equate the theory

¹ Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, II, pp. 60-108.

of the procedure of the Buddhist monastic order with the practice of contemporary political assemblies, is, in the absence of definite evidence, hardly convincing. In the sixth place, the theory of the Epics, the Arthaśāstra or the Dharma Śāstras has often been taken to be an exact statement of contemporary practice. The scientific order of treatment seems to be that Hindu political theory should be extracted primarily from literature and secondarily from inscriptions but political practice should be gleaned primarily from coins and inscriptions, next from foreign accounts and, lastly, from literature. It may be added that some of the conclusions of recent writers do not harmonize with what we know with certainty about the intellectual influences, social institutions and economic conditions of ancient India. Real democracy, for instance, could not be reared on the social chasms of caste. Nor could a 'national' assembly 'of country-folk' function regularly in a large area which was split up into thousands of villages and which lacked the modern means of communications.

It may be desirable to indicate the broad generalisations which emerge from a study of the administrative data of ancient India. It is clear that in spite of some fundamental similarities and identical details, the administrations of the North and the South develop on independent and different lines.

Development
of Northern ad-
ministration.

Northern imperialism like that of the Mauryas and Guptas or southern imperialism like that of the Āndhras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas occasionally linked the political fortunes of the north and the south together but the peculiarities of the administrative system in either region were not obliterated. The most striking difference lies in the sphere of local government. The south developed regular organs of local self-government, while the north was generally content with the informal association of elders with officers. Guilds also developed more in the

south than in the north. Other divergences need not be dwelt upon here but it must be emphasised that, from the administrative point of view, the north and the south must be treated apart. Confining our view to the North, it must be admitted that here the extent of organic development is rather limited. Not only were the ancient Hindus a conservative race but they experienced little economic change which has always been so fruitful of political change in European history. After the Vedic period at any rate, the main features of economic life remain the same. We can watch the institutions of the *R̥igveda*—the heritage with which the Indo-Āryans started on their historical career—change under the impact of geographical factors, economic environment and social organisation. We can notice that caste gains in strength age after age and begins to dominate the structure and working of governmental institutions. We can watch the Vedic tribal assembly recede in the background and ultimately give way to the pageant of a court. We can see the average size of the state become larger and a correspondingly elaborate system of administration spring up. A large number of new offices arise, areas of local government are demarcated. At the same time a network of relationships of varying degrees of suzerainty and vassalage extends over the country. In all these spheres of development the Mauryan empire, founded about 320 B.C., marks a decisive stage. It knows nothing of popular assemblies; it has a machinery of central, provincial and district government, of fiscal and judicial administration, more elaborate than anything known to previous ages. It displays the workings of federal-feudalism on a grand scale. In another matter the Mauryan regime marks the culminating point of statecraft. The Hindu state which never recognised any limits to its scope of activity and which, off and on, concerned itself with every aspect of the

material and moral life of the people, now stood forth as a great instrument of material comfort. Above all it shone forth as a missionary state which must promote morality and righteousness all around. The ideals proclaimed by the Emperor Aśoka were not always followed by the kings who came after him but the idea of the state as the great agency of moral and spiritual welfare never disappeared from India. After the Mauryan empire Indian History enters on a period of obscurity. But the facts and inferences which can be gathered from coins, inscriptions and literature prove that the Mauryan institutions of government did not die out. When the curtain rises again, the Gupta empire displays the Mauryan institutions in a more advanced stage of development. The central officers are more numerous and more definitely posted. The administrative subdivisions are better marked out; offices like those of Bhogapatis and Viṣayapatis are familiar to all. The number of taxes has also increased. The facts of federal-feudalism are recognised by all and symbolised in the gradations of titles and insignia. The Gupta empire stands at the centre of ancient Indian history. All previous history flows into it; all later history issues from it. In the development of the Sanskrit drama, classical literature, Dharma Śāstra thought and Puranic compositions, it marks the decisive epoch. Under its auspices the Hindu system of administration reaches almost the limit of organic development which it was destined to undergo in the north. After the fall of the Gupta empire, the Vardhana empire alone displays any novel features of importance. Thenceforward, organic development ceases altogether; the number of state departments or officers may increase or decrease but there is no essential change, no departure in principle or policy. In the old rut the northern administration ran for five centuries until its free independent life was extinguished by the Musalmāns. It will be observed

that, compared to Greek, Roman or English political development, the range of Hindu administrative evolution was very narrow. But it must be emphasised that besides the small amount of organic development, Hindu administrative practices show considerable variation from age to age and place to place. The foregoing chapters will have demonstrated that the structure and working of institutions, as revealed by the original authorities, was not, except in essentials, uniform over the whole of North India or throughout the ancient age. During the last few centuries for which authentic epigraphic evidence is most abundant, the administration was much less elaborate in some regions than in Kanauj, Magadha or Bengal. As part of the variety which Hindu administration shows, must be reckoned the existence of clan or tribal oligarchies. Their existence is well-attested by Jaina and Buddhist literature, by Greek accounts and by Samudragupta's Allâhâbâd Inscription. They did not all follow a uniform type. Negatively the absence of monarchy as commonly understood and positively, the presence of the oligarchic principle was the only common feature. An interesting passage of rather uncertain date, in the Jaina Âcârâṅga Sûtra speaks of six different kinds of polity as prevalent in north India—"arâyâṇi vâ, gaṇarâyâṇi vâ, juvarâyâṇi vâ, dorajjâṇi vâ, verajjâṇi vâ, viruddharajjâṇi vâ."¹ The import of the statement is not perfectly clear; the last two terms are particularly obscure; perhaps the classification proceeds as much on the basis of difference of administrative structure as of quality of administration. But one can distinguish kingless, gaṇa-ruled and two-ruled states. In any case it appears that the oligarchies differed in constitution among themselves as monarchies did. They were confined to a part of the north and disappeared altogether after the fall of the Gupta empire. It must be remembered

¹ Âcârâṅga Sûtra, II, 3, 1, 10.

that in spite of the important difference in constitution the oligarchies formed part of the general political system, which was predominantly monarchical, of North India. For instance, the Śākya of Kapilavastu acknowledge the suzerainty of the king of Kōśala. The Ārjunāyanas, Yaudheyas and others were included in the Gupta empire.

The principles which underlay the Hindu system of governance as a whole were different from those of ancient Rome or modern Europe. They bear a partial resemblance to the principles of medieval European polity. The state in ancient India was not unitary in the strict sense of the term. It was saturated through and through with the principles of what for convenience may be called federalism and feudalism. It must, of course, be emphasised that the modern notions of federalism—written constitutions, clear demarcation of spheres of power, the idea of the co-ordination of federal and state authorities—were unknown to ancient India. Nor was the economic side of medieval European feudalism present in the Hindu system of organisation. These words have to be used for the sake of convenience. But when applied to ancient India they must be shorn of some of their European associations. They are only meant to imply that, as a general rule, a Hindu kingdom comprised a number of feudatories who enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy, that they themselves might have sub-feudatories of a similar status under them and so on to the third, fourth or fifth degree. A big empire was partly a series of alliances, partly a series of relationships of suzerainty and vassalage and partly an area of directly administered territory. The high-sounding Digvijaya could lead only to such a consummation on a large or small scale. The bond which held an empire together was so slight that it could be snapped at any favourable moment. Under every regime, suzerain or feudal, the village was the ultimate

Principles of
Hindu govern-
ance.

unit of society. Even in the north it enjoyed a sort of social or legal autonomy, and was administered, at least from the Gupta period onwards, in consultation with village elders. Here was another type of localism. Finally, there were a number of associations and corporations, religious, economic and social, which enjoyed a fair degree of autonomy. Sovereignty *de facto* was diffused among all these organisations and the influences which supported them.

Within the limits prescribed by the force of circumstances and principles of social and political organisation,

the Hindu state recognised no restrictions on its activities. While there was much

The Scope of
State Activity.

which had been fashioned by other associations and on which the state could only set its imprimatur, the seal of its force, there was much else which it essayed to perform by means of its own resources. From time to time it elected to propagate Dharma, to inculcate and enforce morality, to maintain or improve the social order, to encourage learning, education and art, to subsidise various academies, to regulate industry and commerce, to foster agriculture, to relieve the distress from famine and calamities, to establish hospitals, rest-houses, charity-halls, etc. All this it essayed to do in addition to its primary functions of defence, order and justice. As Hindu theory emphasises times without number, the king was to be the father of the people. As the Asokan inscriptions testify, the state was to be paternal in the widest sense of the term. Laissez-faire never commanded the allegiance of India. At its highest, the Hindu state was not merely a culture state but an all-pervasive moral and spiritual association. The glory of the situation was that in spite of the missionary zeal which moved its spirit at several epochs, it was generally tolerant of all forms of religious belief. A few bitter religious persecutors like Puṣyamitra and Śaśāṅka certainly flit across the stage of ancient India but, as a rule, Hindu monarchs,

even burning enthusiasts like Aśoka, tolerated all creeds, preached toleration and even went to the extent of patronising sects other than their own. It seems that metaphysical inquiries pursued for long had resulted in the rise and persistence of so many divergent schools of thought that every one was forced to adjust himself to differences and to recognise the imperative necessity of toleration.

The ideals of the Hindu state were certainly high. Its weak point was the despotic character of the hereditary monarchy. Sooner or later the sceptre

Checks on Despotism. was bound to fall into incapable, wicked or oppressive hands. The tyranny revealed in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* makes the flesh creep. The high-handedness of officials, particularly of those in the lowest rung, was not easy to restrain. Nevertheless there were certain checks which operated to mitigate the evils inseparable from the system. Custom could not be lightly disregarded. Following the earlier writers Śukra defines *Deśadharmā* as "custom which may or may not owe its origin to Śruti but is always followed by the people in different climes."¹ The local practices could be violated only at the risk of trouble. Religion which always had a mighty hold on ancient India was another tempering, stabilising and conservative influence in politics. The idea of Dharma was deeply imbedded in the Hindu mind. Dharma, said the *Mahābhārata*, upheld all creatures.² Even earlier, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* had laid down that Dharma had been created by Brahman, that Dharma was the king of kings and that there was nothing higher than Dharma.³ The idea, in fact, had appeared with the Vedas. In the Vedic hymns, as Max Müller puts it, *rita* from meaning

¹ Śukranṭī, IV, III, 64.

² *Mahābhārata*, Śānti Parvan, CIX, 8-13.

³ *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, I, 4, 11-14.

the order of the heavenly bodies became in time the name for moral order and righteousness.¹ It sustained the world.² From the Brâhmanas the idea of Dharma passed to Buddhists. "Dharma is not simply law," says Rhys Davids speaking of Buddhism, "but that which underlies and includes the law—a word often most difficult to translate and best rendered by truth or righteousness."³ Mrs. Rhys Davids explained it as the normal, necessary, eternal order and law of all moral and spiritual things.⁴ The Jainas always define Dharma so as to include the law of inanimate matter. The Hindu view of Dharma as the foundation of order and, therefore, transcending all merely human authority could not fail to exercise some influence on rulers and to serve as a check on the passive loyalty of the people. Besides these moral checks there were what may be called the checks of expediency or enlightened self-interest. Princes who were often anxious to extend their dominions and who were always liable to aggression from neighbouring states must, for purposes of effective defence and offence alike, keep their subjects contented and well-disposed. In his discussion of foreign policy Kautalya emphasises that a king desirous of conquests should keep his subjects well-pleased lest they should be won over by the enemy. The presence of feudatories, ever ready to strike a blow for independence, was another check of expediency on a king. With his own subjects disaffected, a suzerain would hardly be able to control his feudatories. Lastly, the Hindu monarchy, like every other despotism, was tempered by assassination and insurrection. This explains the extraordinary severity of the law of treason in ancient India.

¹ Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1878, p. 235.

² Cf. *Mahâbhârata*, *Karṇa Parvan*, CXIX, 59; *Manu*, IV, 176; *Matsya Purâṇa*, CXLV, 27; CCXLI, 3, 4.

³ Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 45.

⁴ Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 85.

The Hindu state was never a theocracy. The occasional appearance of Brahmanic ruling dynasties was a mere accident like the existence of Vaiśya and Śūdra dynasties. As a rule, the sceptre was wielded by Kṣatriyas or those who were fictitiously recognised as Kṣatriyas.¹ The inscriptions and the foreign accounts indicate that the extreme Brahmanic claims, set forth in the Dharma Sūtras, Dharma Śāstras and Purāṇas, were not fully conceded in practice. The privileges which Brāhmaṇas did actually enjoy in practice were seriously curtailed under Buddhist and Jaina regimes. Nevertheless the Hindu state, though not a theocracy, was often influenced by the Brāhmaṇas, who posed as the depositories of learning, law and religion. The Purohita was always beside the king. Brāhmaṇas supplied many counsellors, judges and other officials. Doubtful points of law were often referred to Brāhmaṇa pariśads. The state recognised the facts of caste and sat rather hard on the lower classes. Apart from the evidence of the theoretical Dharma Sūtras, Dharma Śāstras, Arthaśāstras and Purāṇas, Alberūni testifies to the disabilities imposed on Śūdras in the matter of justice and all that pertains to the higher life of man. The inscriptions show that most of the grants of land or presents of money and articles were made to Brāhmaṇas. Suzerains or feudatories, in the north or south, when addressing their subjects through inscriptions, begin by mentioning the Brāhmaṇas and thus recognise their social primacy. Forced labour, which is alluded to in so many inscriptions, must have fallen on the lower classes. It is from the dominance of caste that Hindu administration

¹ For alleged early contests between Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas for supremacy (Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, Part I, Ch. III) there is no tangible evidence. No safe inference can be drawn from the myths of Paraśu Rāma's extermination of Kṣatriyas in the Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata (Ādi Parvan, LXIV).

draws its darkest stain. In spite of its anxiety to promote morality and righteousness, it was alien to all ideas of democracy, of equality or equal opportunity. The influence of caste on administration is clear from authentic records. It is worth while inquiring how far the state in its turn influenced the development of caste. Buddhist and Jaina kings would naturally reduce its political significance, though nothing could obliterate it. Foreign or mixed tribes and clans which possessed themselves of political authority got installed as Kṣatriyas and thus affected the old order. Some rulers claim in their inscriptions that they actually enforced the rules of caste.¹ If so, such action would promote the tendency of the community to split into innumerable sub-castes. The size of a principality, whether that of a suzerain or a feudatory, was usually small. A ruling of the state on a matter of caste would operate over a restricted area and thus differentiate one group of a wide-spread caste from all others. In course of time they would be permanently disunited. Government servants of various grades would come to form classes of their own; classes which, after the Hindu fashion, would develop into castes. Kāyasthas, already referred to, furnish an example. More direct means might sometimes be employed. Sir William Hunter has recorded the tradition that certain rulers of Orissā, finding themselves in need of more Brāhmaṇas than existed in their dominions, promoted whole groups to Brāhmaṇahood. As the old Brāhmaṇas refused to admit the new ones to commensality and intermarriage, the latter formed themselves into new castes. The Jaina tradition recorded in the *Ādi Purāṇa* that King Bharata, son of the first Tīrthakara Rīṣabha, created Jaina Brāhmaṇas out of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śādras is suggestive. The Rājās of Chambā are said to have bestowed on some

¹ See, for instance, *Bp. Ind.*, I, No. 45.

people the right to wear the sacred thread in return for gifts and services. Alberûni has preserved a tradition that "the kings of antiquity who were industriously devoted to the duties of their office, spent most of their care on the divisions of their subjects into different classes and orders, which they tried to preserve from inter-mixture and disorder. They did not allow anybody to transgress the limits of his class, and even punished those who would not be content with their class."¹ The statement cannot be taken at its face value but it does seem to indicate that governmental action had something to do with the development and maintenance of the system of castes and sub-castes. For later times Tod reports the tradition of a Râjpût prince who regulated the dress of all even to the tie of a turban and who would thus accentuate the outward distinctions of caste.

A few salient features of the Hindu administrative structure may be briefly touched upon. Ancient India

Aspects of the
Administration.

had no perception of the necessity or desirability of separation of functions. The same men wielded civil and military authority at the same time. There were, indeed, judges who were nothing else but in addition to them high executive officers performed judicial duties. Any capable officials might be appointed ambassadors. Aśoka entrusted missionary and censorial work partly to ordinary officers of state.

The organisation of departments under superintendents with a regular secretarial and other staff and all grouped under different ministers is one of the striking features of the Hindu system. It is under this head that the administration displays the greatest amount of development. Kalhaṇa speaks of successive increases in the number of portfolios, superintendents and ministers in Kashmir.

¹ Alberûni, *India*, tr. Sachau, I, pp. 99-100.

A comparative study of the inscriptions reveals the fact that the number of officers steadily increased in the north with the lapse of time until the last age presented the greatest number of them. Of the status of ministers, who next to the king, formed the highest rung of the official ladder, enough has been said before with reference to various epochs and regions. But it may be emphasised here that, though creatures of the king, they occupied a position of the highest dignity and responsibility. As the Jûnâgaḍh Inscription of Rudradâman shows, they sometimes dared to oppose the king. Somadeva Sûri lays down that one of the essential features of ministership was that the king should be afraid of ministers.

The division of a territory into provinces, districts and even lower administrative areas is another noticeable feature of the Hindu system at least from the Mauryan period onwards. Some of the provinces were governed by princes of the blood and others by men drawn from a sort of ruling class. The tenures of offices were generally long. The employment of feudatories in high office, the practice of payment through grants of land, the occasional hereditary transmission of offices and the practical restriction of all high offices to a small class gave a deep feudal tinge to the whole administration. But that was only part of the order of the day. So long as the central power was not assailed by enemies and was wielded by capable hands, it could make itself felt.

The position of the village as the lowest unit of administration need not be discussed again. But it may be emphasised that a village would naturally tend to develop a consciousness of its own. The ancient Hindu village bore some resemblance to that of China, Indo-China and Siam. The functional organisation, typified by the guild, could not have the same fixity and permanence or the same keen sense of autonomy. Nevertheless, as the inscriptions,

coins, seals and literature alike prove, the guild became a real factor in the economic life of the community and appropriated some social and judicial functions. Add to all this the numerous castes and sub-castes with customs and usages of their own and it is clear that Hindu government, in the widest sense of regulation, was essentially a pluralistic one. The whole Hindu system of social and political organisation seems to have developed concurrently on the bases of race, occupation and region. There could be no question of unified loyalty and allegiance. Social development had been multilinear. Loyalty, like sovereignty, was split up. In the multitude of associations and organisations, the task of the state was (1) to secure and maintain those conditions of life in which each group could express itself in the best and fullest manner and without detriment to the rest and (2) to adopt all direct means for the furtherance of popular good and happiness.

How far the Hindu state succeeded in this task is a question difficult to answer in the lamentable absence of adequate data. Nor is a single judgment

The failure
and success of
the Hindu State.

possible. Owing to the vicissitudes of Indian history, each region and epoch should be discussed by itself. But for that there is not sufficient material. Taking a broad, comprehensive view, it is not possible to make any unqualified statement on the achievements of the Hindu state. It must be admitted that the despotism could occasionally lead to oppression, sometimes severe, even diabolical. Not to speak of the Rājatarāṅgiṇī, Nāgasena remarks in Milinda-Pañha that "some people have left the world at the tyranny of kings."¹ The personal expenditure of princes, the heavy bill of the palace, the pomp and pageantry of the court, and frequent wars are likely to have told grievously

¹ Milinda Pañha, II, 1, 6. See also IV, 22.

on the tax-payer--on the poor peasant, artisan or labourer. The Hindu state sanctioned too many tolls and petty dues and too much forced labour. It failed signally to reclaim the tribes on the frontiers or in the centre of India. It fell a victim to caste and deliberately refused to bring the lower classes into line with the rest of Hindu society or to encourage their higher life. It allied itself with priestcraft and conservatism and helped perpetuate the distinctions between man and man. Lastly, the Hindu state, parochial, short-sighted and isolated from the rest of the world, failed to keep abreast of the times and to organise the resources of the country against successive foreign invasions. At last in the thirteenth century it shipwrecked in the storms it was incapable of weathering.

On the other hand, the Hindu state was generally alive to some vital interests of the people. It encouraged agriculture and looked after irrigation. It stepped in to save the consumer from exorbitant profiteering and allowed all classes of craftsmen to band together. It cared for the means of communication and had no small share in promoting the homogeneity of culture throughout the country. The rulers often provided for the comforts of travellers and sick people and showed unstinted generosity to the poor people. The Hindu courts favoured poets and scholars and endowed academies and veritable universities which won the enthusiastic admiration of great Chinese scholars. The Hindu state succeeded in maintaining conditions favourable to the rise of systems of philosophy which still command respect, religions which, in certain aspects, touch the sublimest heights, and a literature which ranks among the great literatures of the world. Sometimes the state directly took the lead in moral and religious reform. Under Aśoka and Kaniska it helped transform the higher life of India and transmitted to the Far East a gospel which still warms and illumines its spiritual life.

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INDEX.

- Abhijñāna Śākuntala, political touches in, 313-15; king in, 313-14; officers in, 314; revenue in, 315.
- Abhimanyu, 86.
- Abhiṣeka, 331. See also Coronation.
- Abhiṣekanātaka, political matter in, 318.
- Abū Zaidul Hasan, of Sirāj, 399.
- Abul Fazl, author of *Āin-i-Akbarī*, 472, 480; on study of Sanskrit, 482.
- Ācāra, meaning of, 238.
- Ācārāṅga Sūtra (Jaina), types of polity in, 503.
- Ācārya, meaning of, 140.
- Ācāryāḥ, meaning, etc., of, 252 n.
- Achaemenides, 196.
- Acton, on Machiavelli, 390.
- Adhikaraṇa, 297.
- Adhikaranalekhaka, 432.
- Adhikārika, 381, 415.
- Adhināyaka, 456.
- Ādhipatya, 37.
- Adhirāja, 36, 403.
- Adhiṣṭhāna, 297, 417.
- Adhiṣṭhāya, 189.
- Adhvaryu, 33.
- Adhyakṣa, 451.
- Ādi Purāna (Jaina), 391-94; Brāhmaṇas in, 392; creation of Brāhmaṇas in, 509; conception of government in, 392; consecration in, 392-93; institutions of government in, 393-94.
- Adisimha, 402; and titles, 403.
- Āditya, 49.
- Ādityasena, 292.
- Ādityavardhana, 343.
- Administration, development in the North, 500-504; in Jātakas, of provinces, villages, etc., 145 sqq.; in Kālidāsa, 313-14; in Kautalya, 267 sqq.; in Mahābhārata, 91 sqq.; in Rīgveda, 28 sqq.; Mauryan, Chap. VIII; general, and of the capital, 183-87, military, 188-89, pre-Mauryan, Chap. VII; of Guptas, 284 sqq., 292 sqq., after Gupta Empire, 305 sqq.; of Vijayanagara, 470; under Āndhras, 222, 224; under Aśoka, general, 206 sqq.; under Kuṣāns, 229; under satraps, 227-28; administrative machinery, of 8th to 16th centuries, in Almorā, 409-10, in Deccan, 410, 414-15, in Gujarāt, 414, in Magadha, 405-408, in Mārwār, Bundelkhand B a s t a r, Chattīsgadh, M ā l w ā, 410-11, in Orissā, 408-409, in Sindh, 401; of 11th and 12th centuries, material for the study of, 442, in Bengal and East Bengal, 450-52, in Kāmārūpa, 452-53, in Kanauja,

- 447—50, in Mālwa and Central India, 453, in Orissā, 462, in Western India, South and Deccan, 462—68; similarity of and its causes in various states after Harṣa, 386-87; administrative system of the Marāṭhās, 471 sqq.; of the 7th century, 365 sqq., material for study of, 343; in Kashmīr and Chambā, Chap. XV. See also Government, King, State, Justice.
- Aediles, 186.
- Aelian, on munificence of Indian kings, 181-82; on presents to kings, 191.
- Africa, relations between the whites and the blacks in South, 20.
- Aggamahesi, 119.
- Agni, 19, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 39, 43.
- Agni Purāṇa, 281, 330—34; ambassadors and their classes in, 334; feudatories in, 333-34; foreign affairs in, 334; king and his qualities and duties in, 330-31; law and judicial administration in, 333; local government in, 332; ministers and officers in, 331-32; princes and their education in, 331; revenue in, 333; state in, 330.
- Agnivarman, 311.
- Agrahāra, 366, 423; code of, 285 *n*.
- Agrahārika, 42.
- Agriculture, and agriculturists under Mauryas, 189—91; and emigration, etc., in Kauṭalya, 263-64; encouraged by the Hindu State, 513; making the village unit of society, 8; predominance of, in India, 6-7.
- Ahāla, 95.
- Āhāra, as an administrative division, 297, 383.
- Aindra Mahābhīṣeka, 48, 49, 50.
- Aindra Śānti, 331.
- Āin-i-Akbarī, 472, 480.
- Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Andhras mentioned in, 221; rise of kingship in, 25-26. See Vedic Literature.
- Aja, 310.
- Ajātaśatru, 47, 160, 163, 164.
- Ajītamāna, 402, 403.
- Ājīvaka(s), 216.
- Ājñādāpaka, 295.
- Ājñāpati, 383.
- Akbar, 478, 480; on social reform, 482.
- Ākranda, 255.
- Ākrandāsāra, 255.
- Akṣāvāpa, as a Ratnīn, 44.
- Akṣapāṭalika, 300, 367, 438.
- Akṣaśālī, 417.
- Al'-Idrīsī, and his writings, 399.
- Al'-Masūdī, and his accounts, 399, 401.
- Al'-Uthbī, 446.
- Alā-ud-dīn Khiljī, 469.
- Alberūnī, and his accounts, 442 sqq.; caste in, 442-43; law and justice in, 443-44; on kings enforcing caste rules, 510; ordeals in, 444-45; punishments in, 445-46; Śūdras and their disabilities, 446, 508.
- Alexander, and India, 492; Brāhmaṇas put to death

- by, 172; invasion of, 166; political arrangements of, 173—75; 168, 171, 176, 177.
- Amātya, 112, 223, (or Amacca) 227; 303, 304, 305, 438, 462.
- Amazons, in harem, in Kautalya, 267.
- Ambassador(s), in Agni Purāṇa, classes and duties of, 334; in Bhāsa, 318; in Kautalya, grades of, 270; in Mahābhārata, 92; in Manu, 242; in Rāmāyaṇa, 112; in Somadeva, 397; in Tiruvalluvar, 279; messengers and their classes in Magadha, in 8th to 10th centuries, 405-406.
- Āmbhi, 168, 174.
- America, relations between the whites and the blacks in southern states of, 20.
- Amitagati Sūtri, and his works, 460.
- Amṛitaprabhā, 422.
- Amṛitaśakti, 341.
- Amusements, gambling, etc., regulation of, in Kautalya, 261.
- Anand Kaul, 435.
- Ananta, 429.
- Anarchy, horrors of, in Rāmāyaṇa, 113. See Nature, state of.
- Andhakavṛiṣṇi (oligarchy), 102.
- Andhra(s), as a power, 221—24; 194, 500.
- Āṅga(s), 69, 249.
- Āṅgiras, 326, 328.
- Anglican Church, 10.
- Anglo-French struggles in South India, 470; Anglo-Saxon institutions influenced by Norman conquest, 490.
- Anon, culture of, resembling pre-Āryan culture, 489.
- Antamahāpāla, 195.
- Antapāla, 271.
- Antarvāsika, 272.
- Āpaddharma, in Mahābhārata, 99-100.
- Āpastamba, 58, 59, 60, 74; local government, revenue and law in, 71—73.
- Arabs, Conquest of Sindh and account of the country by, 398—402, 441.
- Āraksika(s), officers, 307.
- Arbudi, 86.
- Arcadius, 497.
- Ardha-Māgadhi, 116.
- Arhantas, 116.
- Ārhatas, 376.
- Ari, 255.
- Arimitra, 255.
- Arimitrāmitra, 255.
- Aristocracy, in Greek accounts, 170-71; in Roman and Hindu Empires, 497; of warriors in Mahābhārata, 84. See also Ruling class.
- Arjuna, 82, 86, 92, 96.
- Army, and defence in Kautalya, 276; and defence in the 7th century, 372; in Jātakas, 151.
- Arnold, on Rigveda, 17.
- Arrian, 167 n; on aristocracy in India, 170; on Indian castes, 179, 180; on Indian territory, 173; on revenue, 191; on succession, 183; on tribute, 192. See also Greek accounts.
- Artaxerxes Ochus, 196.
- Arthaśāstra(s), 215, 236, 301, 332, 456, 457, 500,

- 508; Bārhaspatya, 279-80; Kauṭīliya, 250-77; Kural compared to, 278-79; nature, date and authorship of, 250-52. See also Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra.
- Artisans, exempted from taxes, 192; in Mahābhārata, 95.
- Āryadeva, 281.
- Āryapīṣuna, 314.
- Ārya Sūtra, 281, 281 n.
- Āsandi, 354.
- Āśoka, 13, 115, 116, 169, 189, 215, 216, 218, 220, 373, 430, 502, 506, 510, 513; and religion, 202-205; as prince, 193; end of, 214; government of the kingdom of, 206-13; liberalising and humanitarian elements of his ethics, 199-200; paternal view of government, 196-97; reforms of, 202; revenue of, 213-14.
- Āśrama, in Jātakas, 121-22.
- Āśramadharma, 61.
- Assembly, in clan oligarchies, 157-58; in Epics, 94; in latest Vedic literature, 55; in Rīgveda, 30-31; National Assembly, 500; nature and work, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 40-43. See also Council.
- Assyrian Empire, local government in, 495.
- Astakula, council of eight, 160.
- Astakulādhikarāṇa, 297.
- Aṣṭapradhāna, council of eight, 471.
- Aṣṭāvakra, 91.
- Astynomi, officers, 186.
- Asuras, 25, 27, 107. See Rākṣasa.
- Āśvaghōṣa, and his writings, 233-34; Ārya Sūtra identified with, 281 n.; on founding of city and city-states, 491.
- Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra, 59, 77.
- Āśvamedha (sacrifice), 49, 59, 60, 90, 222, 283, 283 n, 289, 306, 348.
- Āśvin, 21.
- Āṭavika(s) (officer), 271.
- Atharvaveda, nature of, 33; on Sabhā and Samiti, 31 n.; speaking of Itihāsa-Purāṇa, 328. See also Veda and Vedic Literature.
- Athenian type of republics in India, 499.
- Atibala, 393.
- Atri, 17 n.
- Atri, (Smṛiti writer), 326, 327-28.
- Attapatibhāga, 434.
- Āṭhakathā, 158, 160.
- Auraṅgzeb, conquest of, in South India, 470; Mughal Empire and death of, 489.
- Autonomy, and principles of Hindu government, 504, 505; and Smṛitis, 238-39; in Baudhāyana, 69-70; in Manu, 240-41; in Muslim age, 471, 474, 475, 479, 485; in third and fourth centuries, 232; in seventh century, 346; under Andhras, 222; under Āśoka, 194; under Greek satraps, 174; under Guptas, 286, 287; under Mauryas, 197;

- in the interregnum between Mauryas and Guptas, 259.
- Avadāna(s), 341. See also Buddhist literature.
- Avadha (Oudh), 104.
- Avalokiteśvara, 354, 361.
- Avantisundarī Kathā, 339 n.
- Avantivarman, 420, 427, 431.
- Avimāraka, 319.
- Ayodhyā, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108; description of, in the Rāmāyana, 112-13.
- Āyogava, 53, 392.
- Āyukta, 297.
- Āyuktaka, 366, 383.
- Āyuktapurusa, 300.
- Azes, and his titles, 229.
- Bābur, founder of the Mughal Empire, 489.
- Babylon, culture of, resembling Pre-Āryan culture, 489.
- Babylonian Empire, local government in, 495.
- Bactrian Greeks, in Afghānistān and the Puñjāb, 225.
- Baghdād, administration of, influencing Muslim administration, 480.
- Bāhudentiputra, 252 n; on qualification of ministers, 269.
- Bakhtiyār Khiljī, lieutenant of Mohammad Ghori, 441.
- Baladeva, a hero of the Harivaṃśa, 103.
- Balādhikṛita (military officer), 294.
- Balādhyaḥsa (military officer), 294.
- Balance of Power, idea of, in Kautilya, 256.
- Bāhika, 86.
- Balharā, as king of kings in Muslim accounts, 399-400.
- Bali, 55.
- Bālīn, 318.
- Ballālasena (writer), 461.
- Bānabhatta, 257 n, 340 n, 343, 345, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 356, 357, 360, 363, 365, 368, 369, 371, 372, 373, 375, 376, 380, 385, 395; Bhāsa mentioned by, 317.
- Banavāsī, 416.
- Bandhuvārman, 305.
- Bāra Bhūñiyas, twelve landholders in Bengal, 474-75.
- Barbara(s), 80.
- Bārbhāis, Council of twelve brothers, 471.
- Bardesanes, on Brāhmaṇas' exemption from paying taxes, 192.
- Basādh Seals, 291, 294, 295, 295 n, 305.
- Basileos Basileon Megalon, Azes styled as, 229.
- Battlefield, ethics of the, in Mahābhārata, 100-101. See also War.
- Baudhāyana, 58, 60, 61; law, justice, revenue, war, etc., in, 68-70.
- Bengal, and East Bengal, administration of, in eleventh and twelfth centuries, 450-52.
- Bevan, on Greek influence on India, 175.
- Bhāgabhogakara, and its meaning, 448.
- Bhāgadugha, as a Ratnin, 44.
- Bhagvān Lāl Indrājī, on Mauryan era, 178 n.
- Bhandāgarādhikṛita (officer), 300.

- Bhāṇḍāgarika (officer), in Jātakas, 143, 152; under Andhras, 223.
- Bhandarkar, D. R., on Aśokan history and inscriptions, 194, 201, 206, 209; on political history after Harṣa, 386; on Subandhu, 340.
- Bhandarkar, R. G., on date of Kautalya, 251; on date of Smṛitis, 237.
- Bhaṇḍi, 360, 363, 365.
- Bharadvāja, 17 n.
- Bhāradvāja, 252 n; on qualifications of ministers, 269.
- Bharata, 49, 106, 107.
- Bhārata (Jaina king), 392, 394; creating Brāhmaṇas, 509.
- Bharata (Rāma's brother), 108, 109, 112, 136, 137.
- Bhārata (Kuru), 77.
- Bhārata or Bhāratavaṛṣa, 81, 219.
- Bhāratamañjarī, 435.
- Bhāravi, 389; date of and political matter in, 339.
- Bhartṛhari, 340, 381.
- Bhartṛharinirveda, 391.
- Bhāsa, 315; date of, 317-18; works of and political conditions in, 318-20.
- Bhāskarācārya, 455.
- Bhata(s) (officer), 299, 307, 308, 383, 418, 439, 541; and meaning of, 302.
- Bhatāśvapati (officer), 294.
- Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, 381.
- Bhattāraka, as title, 291-92.
- Bhattārikā (title), 351.
- Bhattikāvya, 381.
- Bhavabhūti, and his works, 388-89.
- Bhavisattakahā, political matter in, 462.
- Bhīma, 82, 85, 86, 90, 320, 383.
- Bhīmasena (king), 459.
- Bhīṣma, 80, 90, 93, 95, 99, 102.
- Bhogagāma, 141.
- Bhogapati (officer), 296, 439, 502.
- Bhogika(s) (officer), 289, 296, 303, 304, 305, 381, 382, 383, 414, 439.
- Bhogikapāla (officer), 382.
- Bhoja, 413, 459; on Kālidāsa, 309; works of, 457.
- Bhojadeva, 404.
- Bhukti (administrative division), and administration of, under Guptas, 296-97; 366 n, 417, 451.
- Bhūmaka Kṣahārāta, 226.
- Bhūmichidra Nyāya, and meaning of, 300-301; in South India, 468.
- Bhūpati, 310.
- Bhūta (a tax), and meaning of, 302.
- Bilhana. See Vidyāpati B.
- Bimbisāra, 162, 163.
- Bindusāra, and his reign, 192-93.
- Bloch, on Ghatotkaca, 282 n.
- Bloomfield, on Vidatha, 31.
- Bodhi tree, uprooted, 375.
- Bodhisatta, 121, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, 136, 139, 150. See also Buddha.
- Brahma, 53, 121.
- Brahma Purāṇa, 337.
- Brahmadatta, 122, 128, 131, 139, 142.
- Brahman, 329, 443, 506.
- Brāhmaṇa(s) (caste), 13, 23, 29, 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 80, 82, 89, 91, 93, 96, 97, 105, 108, 110,

- 112, 113, 157, 172, 188, 192, 196, 216, 220, 228, 327, 328, 331, 332, 333, 341, 359, 371, 376, 444, 445, 446, 448, 460; and Hindu State, 508, 509; and Jaina Brāhmaṇas, in Ādi Purāṇa, 392; and ordeals, in Brihaspati, 326; as a Ratnin, 44; as grantees, 290, 292; as judges, 325; as ministers and buffoons, 391; as rulers 353-54; as rulers in Alberūni, 442-43; as rulers, in Jātakas, 123; averse to ecclesiasticism, 10; importance of, 12; in Bhāsa, 320; in Brihaspati, 326; in Jātakas, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127, 129, 133, 134, 139, 140, 142; in Kashmir, 419, 420, 422, 424, 425, 429; in Kathāsaritsāgara, 459, 460; in Manu, 239, 240, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 258; in Mokṣapariśad, 377; in Nārada, 323; in Purāṇas, 336, 337, 338; in Somadeva, 397, 398; influence of, in Rāmāyaṇa, 105; Kings of Gāndhāra, 285; literary productions of, 114; origin and supremacy, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 35; taking part in administration, 453, 454; without organisation, etc., 10-11. See also Caste.
- Brāhmaṇa(s) (scriptures), 57, 79, 89, 253, 329 n, 499; names, etc., of earlier, 34. See also Vedic literature.
- Brahmaṇaspati, 29.
 Brahmaṛśideśa, 114.
 Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, 337.
 Brihadāranyaka Upaniṣad, on Dharma, 506. See also Upaniṣad and Vedic literature.
 Brihaddevatā, 76-77, 77, 86.
 Brihaddharma Upapurāṇa, government and society in, 337-38.
 Brihadratha, 216.
 Brihannāradya Upapurāṇa, caste and dharma in, 338.
 Brihaspati (god), 43, 50, 312.
 Brihaspati (Smṛiti-writer), 237, 252 n, 322, 327, 369, 379; Arthaśāstra of, 279-80; date of, 323; number of councillors in, 268; on administration, justice, ordeals, etc., 323-26; on Manu, 239.
 Brihatkathā, 459.
 British Government, Rāj-pūtānā under, 475. See also English East India Company.
 Buddha, Gautama, 114, 115, 116, 149, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 201, 204, 377; on claims of birth, 120; precepts of, to Vajjians, 161; stories of his previous births, 116.
 Buddhacarita, 233, 234.
 Buddhaghosa, 116; on coinage, etc., in Gupta age, 287.
 Buddhagupta, 297.
 Buddharāja, 381.
 Buddharasa, 382.
 Buddhism, 115, 154, 193; affecting the Brāhmaṇa

- position, 13; affecting caste, 234; idea of Dharma in, 507; influenced by Greek thought, 490; Mahâyâna B., 374.
- Buddhist(s), 114, 115, 120, 163; in Moksapariśad, 377; persecuted, 216, 373.
- Buddhist, Assembly, 345, 375, 376; council, 115, 231; celebrations, 374-75.
- Buddhist literature, 114 sqq., 154, 156, 158, 160, 281; list of states in, 154-55.
- Buddhist saṃgha, 158, 203; Aśoka's attitude towards, 203-204; nature of, and other organisations, 10.
- Buddhist Social Theory, compared to Brahmanical, 118.
- Buddhist Vihāras, 292, 422.
- Bühler, on date of Manusmṛiti, 237; on Dharma Sūtras, 58; on Mauryan era, 178 *n*; on meaning of Bhūmichidra Nyāya, 300-301; on meaning of Udraṅga, 301.
- Bundelohī ki Vaimśavalī, 488 *n*.
- Bury, on Byzantine Empire, 497.
- Byzantine Empire and the Hindu Empire, 497-98.
- Cairo, administration of, influencing Muslim administration, 480.
- Caityas, 161, 204.
- Cakravartan, 420.
- Cakravartin, 290, 354, 394, 404.
- Cambyases, 495.
- Camūpa, 294, 295.
- Cāṇakya, 250, 251. See Kaṭṭhalya.
- Cāṇakya (minister), 390.
- Cāṇakya Sūtra, 281 *n*, 457-58.
- Candabardāi, 477.
- Candāla, in Jātakas, 119, 120, 144; maiden in Śūdra-ka's court, 352.
- Candragupta, 189, 193, 193*n*, 206, 390, 391; accession and conquests of, 177-78; capital of, 184; dominions, etc., of, 282; C. I, 285 *n*; C. II, 301, 304; dominions, etc., of, C. II, 283.
- Candrāpiḍa, 352, 353; consecration of, and of his consort, 361-63; education of, 363-64.
- Candraprabhā Sūtri, 395.
- Capital, administration of, under Mauryas, 184-87; in Bhāsa, 320; in Mahābhārata, 91; in Rāmāyana, 112-13; of Harṣa, 354, 357; of Kaṇiṣka, 230-31; of Khāravela, 219-20; of Menander, 225; of Sindh, 401. See Cities.
- Carakas, 228.
- Carana, 59, 62.
- Cārudatta (book), 315, 318.
- Cārudatta (person), 316, 317.
- Caṣṭana, 228.
- Caste, and the Hindu State, 508-10; as influencing form of government, 7-8; as influencing Hindu political life, 11-13; attack on, by Aśvaghoṣa, 234; in Alberūni, 442-43; in Alberūni, as affecting punishments, 445-46; in

- Atri, 327; in Baudhâyaṇa, 69-70; in Brihaspati, 324; in Gautama, 62-64, 66-67; in Jâtakas, 118-21; in later Vedic literature, 34-36; in latest Vedic literature, 47; in Mahâbhârata, 79-81; in Manu, 239-40; in *M a n u*, as affecting rules of punishment, 245-46; in Nârada, 323; in Râmâyana, 105-106; in Rîgveda, 19 sqq.; in Sûtras, 61; in Upapurâṇas, 337-38; in Viṣṇu, 248; in Viṣṇu Purâṇa, 335; intercaste marriage, etc., in Kashmîr, 419-20; seven castes of India mentioned by Megasthenes, 178-81.
- Câtas, 299, 307, 308, 366, 383, 418, 439, 451; and meaning of, 302.
- Catuṣsatikâ, 281.
- Caurâsî, 476.
- Cauroddharanika (an officer), 299, 405, 438, 451.
- Censors, under Aśoka, 201-202.
- Census, carried out by Khâravela, 219; carried out by Mauryas, 185-86.
- Ceylon, king of, as vassal, 290.
- Chach, usurping his master's throne, 401.
- Chach Nâmâ, and its contents, 400, 401.
- Chambâ, administrative machinery of, 437-38; administrative system in, Chap. XV; fiscal system of, 439; local government in, 439; political condition in, 436 sqq.; Râjas of, bestowing right to wear sacred thread, 509-510.
- Charpentier, on date of Viśākhadatta, 398 *n*; on Uttarâdhyayana Sûtra, 320.
- China, diplomatic relations with, 229; village of China, Indo-China and Siam compared to Ancient Indian village, 511.
- Chittarâjâdeva, 462.
- Cholas, administration of, as ancestor of present Madras administration, 470.
- Church, Anglican, 10; Buddhist, 231 (see also Buddhist Saṅgha); Roman Catholic, 10.
- Cînas, 80.
- Cintâmaṇi, 340.
- Cities, in Jâtakas, 147-48. See also Capital.
- Clan-oligarchy. See Oligarchy.
- Coin, 284, 322, 343, 385, as source of the history of the Gupta age, 285; different divisions of coin standard, 277 *n*; nature, etc., of coinage in Gupta age, 277 *n*.
- Cole, on guilds, 8-9.
- Colour, as basis of Caste, 20-21. See also Varna.
- Commerce, regulation of, by the state, in Kauṭalya, 264-66.
- Communication, means of, under the Mauryas, 189.
- Confederation, Andhra Empire as, 222; Gupta Empire as, 286; of clan-oligarchies, 160-61; of tribes in Greek accounts,

- 172-73; confederacy of princes, 344. See also Vajjians.
- Consecration, and accompanying ceremonies in Agni Purāṇa, 331; in Ādi Purāṇa, 392-93; in Garuḍa Purāṇa, 337; in Jātakas, 133-35; in Kāliṅga, 219; in later Vedic literature, 39-40; in Mahābhārata, 89-90; in Rāmāyaṇa, 110; in seventh century, 361-63; of a feudatory in Kādambārī, 352-53; of feudatories under the Guptas, 288-89. See also Coronation.
- ✓ Coraghātaka (police officer), in Jātakas, 144.
- Coronation, anniversary of, 212; in Rāmāyaṇa, 110. See also Consecration.
- Corporation. See Guild.
- Council, advisory council of a district, under the Guptas, 297; deliberative council, in Kālidāsa, 312; in Kauṭalya, 268; of eight, 160, 471; of twelve, 471. See also Assembly and Aṣṭapradhāna.
- Court, and its festivities and etiquette in the seventh century, 356-57; classes of, in Brihaspati, 323; court festivals, 183, 191; court proceedings, in Alberūnī, 443-44; Hindu court as patron of poets and scholars, etc., in Kauṭalya, 272; court proceedings, etc., in Mṛicchakatikā, 316-17; generosity of, under the Guptas, 285 n; in Daṇḍin, 340; in Epics, 94; in Jātakas, 145; in Kālidāsa, 314; in Manu, 247; in Merutuṅgacārya, 458-59; in Rājputānā, 476; kinds of, in Kauṭalya, 274; of Harṣa, 355; of Harṣa of Kashmir, 427-28; of Samudhimat, 421.
- Crete, culture of, resembling pre-Āryan culture, 489.
- Criminal Intelligence Department of India, 275. See Spies.
- Cunningham, on Moga, 225; on Yaudheyas, 287 n.
- Curtius, 167 n; his description of Indian potentates, 182-83; on Alexander's arrangements, 174; on Indian governments, 171; on Indian kings, 181.
- Custom, as a check on despotism, 506; force of, 238-39; in Agni Purāṇa, as a source of law, 333; in Brihaspati, custom and royal edicts, 324; in Brihaspati, when opposed to religion, 280; in Manu, 258; in Manu, as a source of law, 240-41; in Rājputānā, as a force, 477.
- Cyrus, 495.
- Daḍanayago (an officer), 231.
- Dadda, 382.
- Daddādevī, 403.
- Dahlmann, J., on the composition of the Mahābhārata, 78.
- Daityas, 99.
- Daivaputra, 233.
- Dakṣa (Smṛiti-writer), 327, 328.

- Dakṣiṇā, in Rigveda, 20.
 Damayanti, 86, 93.
 Danda, a meaning of, 295, in Manu, 241.
 Daṇḍavāsika (an officer), 438.
 Daṇḍanāyaka, and variations of the term, 295, 451.
 Daṇḍanti, 312.
 Daṇḍapāla, 271.
 Daṇḍapāśādhikaraṇa, 295.
 Daṇḍapāśika, 299, 405, 451.
 Daṇḍasakti, 405.
 Daṇḍika, 299, 438.
 Daṇḍimahādevī, and her titles, 468.
 Daṇḍin, 252 *n*; date of and political conditions in, 339-40.
 Danish tax in England, compared to Turuṣkadaṇḍa, 448.
 Darius, 165, 166, 495, 496; Herodotus on, 493; inscription of, 196.
 Darśana (system of philosophy), 238.
 Daśagrāmādhipati, 332.
 Daśakumāracarita, 339.
 Daśāparādhāh, and its meaning, 303; in Chambā, 435.
 Daśapura, 304.
 Daśaratha, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 136, 311.
 Daśaratha (Maurya), 206, 216.
 Dasyu(s), 20, 97; hostility towards, 21.
 Dattādevī, 283 *n*.
 Dauhsāadhanika (police-officer), 366.
 Dauhsādhāsāadhanika (police-officer), 405.
 Dauhsādhika, 451.
 Dauvārika (door-keeper), 272.
 Deccan, administration of, 414 sqq; administrative machinery in, 462 sqq; geography of, 5-6; in the seventh century, 381-84; titles of king, etc., in, 291. See also South.
 Democracy, difficulty of, in Ancient India, 500; in Greek accounts, 170. 171. See also People and Popular element.
 Departments, of administration in Kauṭalya, 270-71.
 Deśadharmā, defined by Sukra, 506.
 Devadatta, 149.
 Devagupta, 344 *n*.
 Devaka, 80.
 Devala, composition of, 327 *n*.
 Devānāmṛtiya, 195. 196, 197. 199, 205, 206, 206 *n*.
 Devāpi, 76, 86.
 Devas, 25.
 Dhamma, 140, 201, 202, 208, 213; Aśoka's idea of, 198-99, 200, 202-203, 204.
 Dhanapāla (writer), 462.
 Dhānya, and its meaning, 302.
 Dhanyavisnu, 293.
 Dharma, 238, 239, 327, 338, 505; definition of, 506-507; idea of, in latest Vedic literature, 56; in R̥ṣa, 319; sources of, in Yājñavalkya, 249-50. See also Law.
 Dharma Śāstra(s), 23, 58, 61, 62, 78, 114, 248, 249, 250, 253, 277, 301, 332, 336, 379, 387, 388, 393, 412, 436, 456, 500, 508; later, Chav. XII; of Manu, 239. See also Smṛiti,

- Dharma Sūtra(s), 23, 30, 57, 58, 61 sqq.; 114, 187, 237, 249, 253, 388, 509.
 Dharmamahāmātras, 415.
 Dharmamahārājas, 415.
 Dharmapāla, 456.
 Dharmapāladeva, 403, 405.
 Dharmaparikṣā, 460.
 Dhritarāstra, 80, 84, 86, 87, 88, 89, 92, 93, 100.
 Dhruvādhikaraṇa, 299.
 Dhruvasena, 307, 348.
 Diddā, 429.
 Diderot, on Machiavelli, 100.
 Digvijaya, 49, 83, 90, 348, 352, 362, 363, 394, 421, 427, 478, 504.
 Dikṣita, 47.
 Dīlpa, 311, 330.
 Diplomacy, in Brihaspati, 280; in Kautilya, 255-56; in Mahābhārata, 98, 99; in Purāṇas, 337; in seventh century, 351-52; in Tiruvalluvar, 279; of Bindusāra, 193.
 Diocletian, effect of his policy, 497.
 Diodorus, 167 n. 169; description of Patala by, 169; on agricultural land, 190; on Indian castes, 179; on Indian governments, 171.
 Divira(s), 300, 432.
 Divirapati, 383.
 Divorce, in Kautilya, 260.
 Divyavadāna, 214.
 Doma, 420.
 Donamāpaka, (an officer), in Jātakas, 143.
 Dovārika (an officer), in Jātakas, 144.
 Drāmila, Kautilya called, 252 n.
 Drāṅgika, 298, 307, 367.
 Droṇa, 90, 93.
 Dronasimha (Mahārāja), 288.
 Drupada, 92.
 Durgapāla (an officer), 271.
 Duryodhana, 82, 83, 85, 87, 319, 338.
 Dusyanta, 314, 315.
 Dūta(s), 44, 213. See also Prahlita, Spies, and Messenger.
 Dūtaka, 295, 303, 304, 305, 308, 366, 383, 405, 412, 468.
 Dūtavākyaṃ, sovereignty in, 319.
 Dutta, M. N., on Kāmadaka's Nītisāra, 281 n.
 Dvairāja, 259.
 Dvārapati, 431.
 Dvija(s), 64, 71, 446. See also Brāhmaṇa (caste), and Vipra.
 Education, and court patronage in Mughal Empire, 481-83; of princes in Agni Purāṇa, 331; in Āśvaghosa, 234; in Kalidāsa, 219; in Kautilya, 268 n.; in Pañcatantra, 341; in Persia, 494-95; in seventh century, 363-64; of princes, etc., at Takṣaśilā, 123-25; of subjects, as king's duty, in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 338.
 Egypt, compared to India, 184; extension of Bindusāra's diplomacy to, 193.
 Ekādhirāja, 290.
 Ekarāja, in Vedic literature, 37.
 Ekbatana, 181.

- Election, etc., in later Vedic literature, 38-39; in Mahābhārata, 87.
- Emperor, pomp and glory of, in the seventh century, 355-56; titles of, 290-92. See King.
- Epics, Chap. V, 114, 115, 151, 154, 253, 364, 388, 500; Brihaddevatā, 76-77; Mahābhārata, 77-103; Rāmāyaṇa, 103-113.
- Espionage. See spies.
- Europe, compared to India, 10-11; federation in modern Europe and India, 504; Mediæval Europe and guilds, 8-9; Mediæval Europe compared to India, 259; modern Europe compared to Ancient India in espionage, 275.
- Excise policy, in Kauṭalya, 261-62.
- Executive, in clan-oligarchies, 159. See also Administration.
- Factories, accounts kept of, in Kauṭalya, 271; state factories in Kauṭalya, 263; state of, in Mahābhārata, 95; state of, in Megasthenes, 181.
- Fahian, as a source of the history of Gupta age, 284; general observations of, on government, 284-85; on hospitals, etc., 285.
- Famine relief, in Kauṭalya, 264.
- Federal-feudal, character of Hindu Polity corroborated by the Arabs, 400; conditions obtaining in India, 226; idea in Bhāsa, 320. See also Feudal-federal.
- Federal-feudalism in Ancient India, 233; in Gupta Empire, 502; in Jaina works, 395; in Ksemendra, 436; in Mauryan Empire, 501; in Persian organisation, 496; in Sindh, 346; in Sukranīti, 487; the Muslim rule and, 488-89. See also Feudal-federalism.
- Federalism, in modern Europe and India, 504.
- Feudal, administration after the Mauryas, 307-308; conditions after Harsa, 386; conditions in Kashmir, 421; elements in the state in Mahābhārata, 81 sqq.
- Feudal tendency, in Jātakas, 152; in Kālidāsa, 310; in later Vedic literature, 37; in Mahābhārata, 94-95; in Rīgveda, 31-32. See also Feudalism.
- Feudal-federal, empire, 282; organisation under the Guptas, 285-86; structure in Vijayanagara, 470; system in Bengal, 452.
- Feudal-federalism, in the Puñjāb, 474. See also Federal-feudalism.
- Feudalism, after the Mauryas, 216-17; in Adi Purāṇa and other Jaina works, 394-95; in Arab accounts, 399-400; in interregnum between Mauryas and Guptas, 259; in Kanauja, 499; in Kathākoṣa, 461; in Kōśala, 162; in Mediæval Europe and

India, 504; in Padma-gupta, 458; in Rājapūtānā and Central India, 479; in Subandhu, 340; in 8th—10th centuries, 402-403; under the Andhras, 223; under the Guptas, 285-86, 290.

Feudatories, ancestors of Harsa as, 343-44; and their relations with the Suzerain, in Agni Purāna, 333-34; in Mahābhārata, 83-84; in Nāgānanda and Ratnāvalī, 380; in seventh century, 350-51, 352-53; and titles, etc., after the Guptas, 307; in Chambā, 436-37; in 8th—10th centuries, 414, 415-16; under the Andhras, 223; as a check on despotism, 507; as high officers, 54; as officers in the seventh century, 366; change in the status of, in seventh century, 353; conservation of, in seventh century, 352-53; government of, 303-304; government of the estates of, in Somadeva, 396; in Arab accounts, 400, 401; in Hindu Empires, 504; in Jaina works, 392, 393, 394-95; in Kālidāsa, 310, 312; in Kāmarūpa, 453, 455; in Kashmir, 421; in Kauṭalya, 257; in Rājapūtānā, 475-76; in Rāmāvana, 106-107; in Śukra, 487; in 7th century A.D., 346, 347, 348, 349, 350; in 8th—10th centuries, in Magadha, 405, 407, 408; making grants in 8th—10th cen-

turies, 412-13; status, grades, conservation of, under the Guptas, 288—90; titles of, in 7th century, in Deccan, 381—84; titles of, their consorts in 7th century, 351; titles and grants, etc., of, in Orissā, 452; titles, rank, etc., of, in Deccan and Western and South Indian, 462 sqq.; tribute from, in Kauṭalya, 277; in seventh century, 369; under the Guptas, 303; under the Śuṅgas, 217, 356, 363. See also Vassals.

Finance, Emergency, in Mahābhārata, 97. See Revenue.

Fiscal policy, etc. See Revenue.

Fleet, on Gupta era, 282 n.; on Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra, 251; on meaning of Cāṭas and Bhaṭas, 302; on meaning of Pañcamahāśabda, 384; on meaning of Udraṅga, 301.

Foreign policy, and affairs in Agni Purāna, 334; in Jātakas, 151-52; in Kauṭalya, 254 sqq.; in Mahābhārata, 98—100; in Manu, Viṣṇu, Yājñiavalkya, 258; in Tiruvalluvar, 279.

France, nobility of mediæval France compared to that of Chambā, 437.

Gahapati, 120.

Gāma-bhojaka, and his functions, etc., in Jātakas, 146-47.

- Gaṇa(s), 102, 156. See also Oligarchy.
- Gaṅgaridai (or Gandaritai), kings of the, 176, 177.
- Gārgya, 327.
- Gārgya Bālāki, 47.
- Garuḍa Purāṇa, 337, 456.
- Gāthas, 77.
- Gaulmika (an officer), 300, 438.
- Gaumata, 493.
- Gautama, 58, 61, 70, 73, 323; Caste, Government, Justice, Revenue, etc., in, 62-68.
- Gautama Buddha, 114, 120. See Buddha.
- Gautamīputra, 222, 226, 240. See also Sātakarni.
- Geldner, on Assembly, 30.
- Geography, as influencing Hindu political institutions, 3 sq.
- Germans, compared to early Indians, 22.
- Ghaṭotkaca, 282, 286.
- Gibbon, on oriental history, 498.
- Gobhila, Grihya Sūtra of, 61.
- Golden age, 375; in Purāṇas, 336, 337.
- Gondophares, 229.
- Gopa (an officer), 271.
- Goptā, 296.
- Goṣṭhis, 232, 378.
- Govardhana, 228.
- Government, Committee of, in Mauryan military administration, 188; conception of, in Ādi Purāṇa, 392; democratic, in Greek accounts, 170, 171; duties, etc., of, in Purāṇas, 335, in Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 321; form of, in Ancient India, 7-8; in clan-oligarchies, 156-57; in Rāmāyaṇa, 107; general observations on, by Fahien, 284-85; in Gautama, 64-66; local, in Agni Purāṇa, 332, in Apastamba, 71-72, in clan-oligarchies, 160; in Kashmir, 433; in Kauṭalya, 271; in Mahābhārata, 94-95; in Manu, 242-43; in North and South, 500; in Persia, 495-96; in Upapurāṇas, 337-38; in Viṣṇu, 248, in 8th-10th centuries in south, 416; in 11th-12th centuries, 453-55; local and provincial, in 8th-10th centuries, in Magadha, 407-408; nature of, in Greek accounts, 181 sqq.; necessity of, in Rāmāyaṇa, 113; of feudatories, 303-304; of the kingdom under the Mauryas, 189; officers of, and general administration under the Guptas, 292 sqq.; paternal, 196-97; paternal, under the Guptas, 292; sphere of, in Yājñavalkya, 250; spirit and activity of, in the seventh century, 373-75. See also Administration, King and State.
- Govikarta, as a Ratnin, 44.
- Grāma, 24-25; as administrative division, 296, 451; administration of, under the Guptas, 297-98. See village, Local Government.
- Grāmādhīpati, 94, 332.
- Grāmakāyasthas, 433. See also Kāyasthas.

- Grāmakūta 415.
 Grāmanī, 24, 29, 52, 54, 94;
 as a Rātnin, 44; as a Vīra,
 43.
 Grāmika, 297, 298.
 Grant, of land, after the
 Guptas, 306; in Gupta
 age, 292—94, 302-303; in
 Kanauja, 447, 449; in
 11th-12th centuries, 455-
 56; in Rājputānā, 477;
 made by feudatories, 412-
 13; of Chambā Kings,
 440; of Kashmīra Kings,
 422; of Mughals, 482-83.
 Great Britain, type of mon-
 archy in, compared to
 India, 499.
 Greece, compared to
 India in administration,
 186; contrasted with India
 in respect of geography,
 4; contrasted with India
 in respect of intensity of
 life, 7; slavery in, 45.
 See also Hellas.
 Greek accounts, Alexander's
 political arrangements
 given in, 173—75; com-
 bination of tribes in, 172-
 73; of Ancient India, 166
 sqq.; of Takkasīlā, 123;
 political conditions in,
 168—72; republics in,
 499; writers of and value
 of, 166-67, 167 n.
 Greek titles of Indo-Scythian
 kings, 229.
 Greeks, Bactrian, 225; com-
 pared to early Indians,
 23; influence, in India of,
 490—92; invasions by,
 215; on Andhras, 221; on
 drums, etc., 201; on
 Kathas, 169; political in-
 stitutions of the, 1.
 Green, T. H., on Empires
 of the East, 498.
 Grihakṛitya, 428, 431.
 Grihya Sūtra, 57, 58, 61.
 Gṛitsamada, 17 n.
 Guild(s), as a real factor in
 the life of the community,
 511-12; as existing in
 Mediæval Europe and An-
 cient India, 8-9; in Brī-
 haspati, 324; in Jātakas,
 152-53; in Kauṭalya,
 266, 271; in Mahā-
 bhārata, 103; in North
 and South, 500-501;
 in Rāmāyana, 113; in 7th
 century, 378-79; in 8th—
 10th centuries, 413-14;
 under the Āndhras, 224;
 under the Guptas, 297,
 304-305, under the sat-
 raps, 228.
 Guṇabhadracārya, 391, 394.
 Guṇādhya, 436, 459.
 Gupta (king), 286.
 Gupta, administration, re-
 cords on, 284; dynasty,
 282—84; empire, as stand-
 ing at the centre of An-
 cient Indian history, 308;
 composition of, 285—90;
 destruction of, 322; nature
 of, 502; empire and after,
 Chap. XI; era, 282,
 282 n.; institutions as re-
 flected in Kālidāsa, 308
 sqq.; period, 222; rule,
 prophecy about, in Hari-
 vamaśa Purāṇa 284 n.;
 Guptas, 340 n., 500; fun-
 damental political condi-
 tions under the, 285 sqq.;
 generosity and tolerance of
 the, 285 n.; grants, etc.,
 under the, 292—94; insti-
 tutions under the, 215;

- political conditions in the interregnum between the Mauryas and the Guptas, 259.
- Gūrjara-Pratihārars, and their decline, 441; ascendancy of, 385-86.
- Gustav Oppert, on date of Sukranāti, 486 *n.*
- Haradatta, 67.
- Harem, and its influence in Kashmīr, 428; in Ādi Purāṇa, 393; in Agni Purāṇa, 332; in Jātakas, 136-37; in Kālidāsa, 313; in Kauṭalya, 267, 272; in Rājapūtānā, 476; in Rāmāyaṇa, 111; of the Mauryas, 206; under the Guptas, 296.
- Haribhadra, and his works, 396.
- Harihara, 391.
- Hariṣeṇa, 304; on Samudragupta, 283.
- Hārīta (Smṛiti-writer), 326, 328.
- Harivamśa, 103.
- Harivamśa Purāṇa, 338 *n.*, 394; prophecy about Gupta rule in, 284 *n.*
- Harmony, as the law of being of gaṇas, in Mahābhārata, 102; in council chamber, in Bṛhaspati, 280.
- Harsa (or Harṣavardhana), 291, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 354, 365, 368, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 385; an eclectic, 377; as administrator, 354-55; as author, 380; beneficial measures of, 373-74; capital and palace establishment of, 357; charity of, 358-59; court and court-festivals of, 356-57; date of his death, 344, 344 *n.*; dynasty, etc., of, 343-44; education, etc., of, 363; era of, 363; luxury, etc., of, 357-58; nature of his dominion, 344-45; pomp and glory of, 355-56; succession of, 360-61.
- Harsa (of Kashmīr), 422, 423, 427.
- Harṣacarita, 317, 343, 347, 348, 349, 354, 365, 366, 367, 369, 372, 373.
- Hasan, 435.
- Hasan Nizāmī, 447.
- Hastin (Mahārāja), 288, 289, 303, 304.
- Hastināpur, 88.
- Hastyaśvoṣṭrabalavyāpṛitaka (an officer), 438.
- Hellas, institutions of, 168; soldiers of, 176. See also Greece, and Greeks.
- Hemacandra, on Kauṭalya, 252 *n.*
- Heraññika (an officer), in Jātakas, 143.
- Herodotus, on Darius, 493.
- Hillebrandt, on the authority of Kauṭīliya Arthashastra, 25 *n.*; on Sabhā and Samiti, 31 *n.*
- Hindu administration or government, aspects of, 510-12; different views on, 498-500; Hindu administrative evolution compared to Greek, Roman and English political development, 503;

- indigenous origin of Hindu Administrative system, 489 sqq.; influence on Muslim administration of, 479 sqq.; principles of, 504-505.
- Hindu Empire(s), compared with later Roman Empire, 497-98; compared with Persian Empire, 493-96; compared and contrasted with Macedonian and Roman Empires, 492; nature of, 504-505.
- Hindu institutions, as influenced by pre-Aryan culture, 489-90; by the Greeks, 490-92; by those of Persia, 492-96; Hindu Political institutions, as influenced by caste, 11-13, by geography, 3 sqq.; by racial characteristics, 9 sqq., by religion, 13; evidence about, 1 sqq.; raw materials for the study of, 15-16; Hindu political theory in mediæval age, 486-87. See also India.
- Hindu monarchs, checks to despotism of, 506-507; position of, 505; toleration of, 505-506.
- Hindu Polity, in the Muslim period, 469 sqq.; in Mahârâstra, 471-73, in North, 473-75; in Rāj-pūṭānā, 475-79, in Vijayanagara, 470.
- Hindu State, and caste, 508-10; failure and success of, 512-13; ideals of a, 204-205; in Gupta age, 502; in Mauryan age, 501-502; pluralistic, its task, 512; scope of activity of, 505-506.
- Hiranya, and meanings of, 302, 369.
- Hiranyakeśin 75.
- Hoernle, on date of Kālidāsa, 309.
- Holtzmann, on Mahābhārata, 78.
- Hopkins, on dates of Smṛitis, 237; on Dharma Sāstras, 58; on epic, 77.
- Huns, 224, 284, 291, 322, 350, 363.
- Hunter, Sir William, on promotion to Brāhmaṇahood, 509.
- Huviṣka, 230, 231.
- Ibn Khurdabā, and his accounts, 399.
- Iksvāku, 106, 107, 109.
- India, Ancient, compared to Mediæval Europe, 259; called Yin-tu, 345; compared to Egypt, 184; to Europe, 10-11; to Greece and Rome, 45-186; to Italy, 100; contrasted with Greece, 4; geography of, influencing her political institutions, 3 sqq.; history of, viewed from North or South, 14-15; political history of, beginnings of, 154. See Hindu, etc.
- Indo-Greek dynasties, in west of India, 225.
- Indo-Parthian dynasties, in west of India, 225; principalities, fall of, 229.
- Indo-Scythian kings, 229.
- Indra, 21, 25, 26, 37, 39, 41, 43, 50, 51, 320, 321, 342, 352.

- Indra (teacher), 252 *n.*
 Indumattī, 310.
 Inscriptions, 310, 322, 328, 338, 343, 345, 354, 365, 366, 385, 402, 403, 436, 499; as primary source of Gupta history, 284; as source of 11th-12th century history, 442, 447 sqq.; Naqsh-Rustam Inscription of Darius, 196; of Aśoka, as authority for his reign, value of, 195-96; of the interval between Guptas and Vardhanas, 305 sqq.
 Interest, in Brihaddharma Purāṇa, 337-38; in Gautama, 67; in Kauṭalya, 265.
 Irānians, culture, etc., of, akin to those of the Hindus, 493 sqq. See also Persia.
 Islām, impact of the rising power of, 398. See also Muslim.
 Italy, mediæval, compared with Ancient India, 100.
 Itihāsa-Purāṇa, 328-29.
 I-tsing, 340, 369, 375, 378 *n.*, 380.
 Jacobi, on date of Viśākhadatta, 390 *n.*; on Rāmāyaṇa, 104.
 Jahāṅgīr, 478; on social reform, 482; saying of, compared with Kauṭalya's, 268 *n.*
 Jaimini, on local usage, 238.
 Jaiminiya Nyāya Mālāvis-tara, 237, 238.
 Jaina(s), 163, 376; idea of Dharma among the, 507.
 Jaina literature, 154, 156, 158; from 8th to 10th centuries, 391 sqq.; on Takkasīlā, 123.
 Jaina Nandisūtra, 252 *n.*
 Jaina orders, nature of, 10.
 Jaina tradition, about Candragupta, 193 *n.*; about Samprati, 216.
 Jainism, 116, 154, 154 *n.*, 216; affecting Brahmanic position, 13.
 Jaipāla, 446, 447.
 Jalauka, 430.
 Jambūdvīpa, 162.
 Jana, 24, 25.
 Janaka, 47, 48, 91, 111.
 Janamejaya, 48, 52, 53, 87.
 Janapada, 162, 287, 499.
 Janapadasa, 232.
 Janendra, 306.
 Jarāsaṃdha, 81, 98, 99.
 Jātaka(s), 78, 104, Chap. VI, 154, 156, 208, 234, 253, 281, 341, 436; administration of the kingdom in, 145 sqq.; administration of the army in, 151; administration of justice in, 149-50; Āśramas in, 121-22; Buddhist social theory in, 118; caste in, 118—21: choice of a king by the festal car in, 131-32; cities in, 147-48; consecration of the king in, 133-34; court in, 145; duties of the king in, 138-39; feudal tendencies in, 152; foreign affairs in, 151-52; guilds in, 152-53; harem in, 136-37; king and the character of his rule in, 125—27; matter and dates, etc., of, 116—18; ministers and officers in, 142—

- 45; popular acceptance of king in, 133; Purohita and his functions in, 140—42; relations between kings and princes in, 132-33; revenue and its collection in, 148-49; revolt against the king in, 127-28; royal charity in, 137-38; royal splendour in, 135; ruling class in, 122; succession to the throne in, 128—31; Takkasilā mentioned in, 123—25; Uparājan in, 140; villages in, 146-47.
- Jātakamālā, 281.
- Jauval, 308.
- Jayabhata II, 289.
- Jayakumāra, 393.
- Jayapatra, 485.
- Jayāpīḍa, 420, 427.
- Jayasena, 375.
- Jayaswal, on ancient Hindu political system, 498-99; on Buddhist Saṃgha, 158; on date of Mudrārākṣas, 390 n.; on date of Sukranīti, 486 n.; on Dharma Sūtras, 58; on Nandas, 176 n.; on some statues, 164 n.
- Jayatu Vriṣaḥ, 308.
- Jīmūtavāhana, 488 n.
- Jina, 220.
- Jinasenācārya, 391, 391 n.
- Johannes Stobaios, on water ordeal in Mauryan administration, 187-88.
- Jolly, on dates of Smṛitis, 237; on Dharmra Sūtras, 58; on Kāmandaka, 281 n.; on Kauṭalya, 251; on Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra, 252 n.
- Jones, Sir W., on dates of Manu, 236; on Manu, 58.
- Judgment, example of Sanskrit J., 485-86.
- Justice, administration of, in Agni Purāṇa, 333; in Alberūnī, 443-46; in Bauddhāyana, 68-70; in Brihaspati, 323-26; in Jātakas, 149-50; in Kālidāsa, 314; in Kauṭalya, 274-75; in Manu, 246-48; in Nārada, 323; in Rājapūtānā, 476; in seventh century, 369-71, in Yājñavalkya, 250; administration of, under Aśoka, 210—12, under the Mauryas, 187-88; as a source of revenue under the Guptas, 303; in Bauddhāyana, 68-70; in Gautama, 65-67; in Kashmīr, 434; in later Vedic literature, 45; in latest Vedic literature, 54-55; in Rīgveda, 30; rural J. in Musalmān age, 484; stern J. in Uttara Purāṇa, 395 n.; the Judiciary in clan oligarchies, 160.
- Justinian, institutes of, compared to those of Manu, 58.
- Jyeṣṭhakāyastha, 406.
- Kādambarī, 343, 361; education of Candrāpīḍa in, 363-64; king's luxury in, 357-58; political conditions in, 352-53.
- Kadphises, 229.
- Kaikiyī, 108, 111.
- Kalhana, 385, 421, 426, 430, 435, 436, 437, 483, 506, 510; age and work of, 419.

- Kālidāsa, 217, 233, 317, 318, 461; Abhijñāna Śākuntala of, 313—15; as a source of Gupta history, 284; dates, etc., of, 309, 309 *n.*; Kumārasambhava of, 312; Mālavikāgnimitra of, 312—13; Raghuvamśa of, 309—12; traditions in, 217—18; Vikramorvaśi of, 313.
 Kālīnga, as a power, 218—21.
 Kaliyuga, 335, 338.
 Kāma, 239.
 Kāmandaka, 252 *n.*, 257 *n.*, 280—81, 330, 336.
 Kāmasāstra, 250.
 Kambojas, 237.
 Kāmarūpa, administration of, in 11th—12th centuries, 452—53.
 Kaṇāda, 56 *n.*
 Kanakasabhai, V., on Ancient Tāmls, 277—78.
 Kanauja (or Kānyakubja), administrative machinery of, 442—50.
 Kaniska, 229—32, 234, 513; end of, 232; titles of the kings of his dynasty, 230.
 Kanva, 17, 314; K. dynasty at Pātaliputra, 271; K. Empire, end of, 385.
 Karaṇas, 300.
 Karaṇi, 367.
 Karaṇika, 300.
 Karmāntika, (an officer), 270.
 Karmasaciva (an officer), 227.
 Karmasthāna, 430, 431.
 Karṇa, 82, 83, 90.
 Kartri, 300.
 Kāruvākī, 206.
 Kashmir, administrative system of, Chap. XV; caste in, 419—20; despotism and tyranny of kings of, and protests, insurrections, etc., against them, 421—26; feudal conditions in, 421; historiography in, 435; justice in, 434; kings in, 427—28; king's harem in, 428; local government in, 433; ministers and officers in, 430—33; revenue in, 434; scope of state activity in, 426—27; sources of history of, 385; succession in, 428—30.
 Kāśī, 114.
 Kātha(s), (or Kathians), compared to Spartans, 169; rearing of children among the, 168—69.
 Kathākośa, political matter in, 461.
 Kathāsaritsāgara, political matter in, 459—60.
 Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, 59.
 Kātyāyana (Smṛiti-writer), 238, 326, 499; date of, 237.
 Kaṇapadanta, on qualification of ministers, 269.
 Kauśalyā, 108, 111.
 Kauṭalya, 250, 251, 312, 396, 507; agriculture in, 263—64; amusements, gambling, etc., in, 261; civil law in, 266—67; commerce in, 264—66; compared with contemporary southern writers, 277—79; compared with Manu, Viṣṇu and Yājñavalkya, 258; control of professions in, 262; court and household officers in, 272; defence and army in, 276; departments of state in, 270—71; excise policy in, 261—62;

- famine relief in, 264; guilds in, 266; interstatal diplomacy and relations in, 254-56; irrigation in, 264; judicial system in, 274-75; king, his timetable, harem, relations with princes, council, etc., in, 267-68; local government in, 271; ministers, etc., and their qualifications in, 268-70; persistence of his ideas in later Sanskrit literature, 280-81; political conditions in, 254 sqq.; projected social legislation in, 260; protectorates in, 256-57; provision against calamities, etc., in, 266-67; Purohita in, 26; regulation of economic life by the state, 263 sqq.; revenue in, 276-77; salaries, pensions, promotion, etc., of officers in, 272-74; scope of state activity in, 259 sqq.; spies in, 275-76; state as a business concern in, 262-63; variations of the names of, and identification of, 252 n, 253 n.
- Kauthuma, 59.
- Kautilya Arthashastra, 326, 472, 481; date and authorship of, 251-52, 251 n, 252 n; discovered, 250-51; political condition, administration, etc., in, 254-77; value of, 253-54. See also Kautilya.
- Kautilya, 252 n. See Kautilya.
- Kavirāja, (writer), 461.
- Kayadhu, 25.
- Kāyastha, 297, 406, 432, 438, 449, 471, 483-84, 484 n, 509; a generic term, 420, 420 n. See Jyēṣṭhakāyastha and Grāmākāyastha.
- Keith, on authorship of Kautilya Arthashastra, 252 n; on date of Kautilya, 251; on early times, 24; on Jātakas, 117; on Purohita, 29; on Rīgveda, 2.
- Kern, on Pāli, 116 n.
- Khāravela (Jaina king), 7, 218-20; titles of, 220.
- Khattiya, in Jātakas, 120. See Kṣatriya.
- Khshathrapāvan, 226.
- King, acceptance of, by the people and consecration, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 38-40; and his circle, in Rāmāyaṇa, 110-111; and ministers, in Mudrārākṣasa, 390-91; as central and most important institution, 205-206; as father to his people to promote their material and moral welfare, 196-99; as judge, etc., 45; as real Emperor, 290; behaviour of, towards conquered people, in Manu, Viṣṇu, Yājñavalkya, 258; capital, palace, etc., of, in Mahābhārata, 91; caste of, in Vedic literature, 53; character of his rule in Jātakas, 126-27; charity practised by, in Jātakas, 137-38; choice by the festal car of, in Jātakas, 131-32; consecration of, in Mahābhārata, 90; despotism of, in Kashmir,

421-22; duties and accessibility of, in Bhavabhūti, 389; duties and qualities of, in Agni Purāṇa, 330-31; duties of, in Jātakas, 138-39; in Parāśara, 327; duties, etc., of, in Brihaspati, 280; in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, 334-35; in Soma-deva, 396-97; in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 338-39; firmness inculcated on, in later Vedic literature, 43; friends and officers of, in later Vedic literature, 43-44; harem of, in Kāshmīr, 428; in Bhāsa, 319; in Brahma Purāṇa, 337; in Cānakya Sūtras, 458; in Gupta period, 292; in Jātakas, 125-26; in Kālidāsa, 310-12, 312, 313-15; in Kathākoṣa, 461; in Kathāsaritsāgara, 459; in Māgha, 389; in Mahābhārata, 85-86; in Nārada, 323; in Persia, 493-94; in Puruṣaparīkṣa, 460; in Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 321; in Varāha Purāṇa, 336; life of, in Ādi Purāṇa, 393, in Greek accounts, 181-83; officers of, in latest Vedic literature, 52-53; officers and ministers of, in Mahābhārata, 91-93; personal share of, in Jātakas, 133; procession of, in Prabodhacandrodāya, 342; qualities of, in Tiruvalluvar, 278-79; relations between group of neighbouring kings, in Kautalya, 254-56; relations of, with princes, in Jātakas, 132-33; revolt

against, in Jātakas, 127-28; royal charity in 7th century, 358-59; royal luxury in 7th century, 357-58; splendour of, in Jātakas, 135; subject-kings, 350, 356; succession of, in Jātakas, 128-31; in Mahābhārata, 86-89; ten duties of, in Jātakas, 126; time table, harem, relations with princes, council, etc., of, in Kautalya, 267-68; titles of, in Kalīṅga, 219, in Kanauja, 447; titles of king and his consort from Gupta period onwards, 290-92; titles of kings subjugated by the Guptas, 233; tyranny of, 512; tyranny of, and protests, etc., against, 422-26.

Kingdom, as private property, 461; of Kosalā, 161-62; of Magadha, 162-67; other kingdoms, 164-165.

Kingships, Aryan kingship partly developed from pre-Aryan example, 489-90; in Aśvaghoṣa, in Brihad-devatā, 76-77; in Mahābhārata, 102; in Rīgveda, 25-27; non-Ksatriya, after the Marryas, 216, in Jātakas, 123, in Mahābhārata, 80; in 7th century, 353-54, in 8th-10th centuries, 404; non-Ksatriya (Śūdra) k., in Matsya Purāṇa, 335-36, in 7th century, 346; non-Ksatriya k., 346; of Brāhmanic origin, 221. See also Monarchy, Government, State, etc.

- Kirāta(s), 80.
 Kirātārjuniya, 339, 389.
 Kiśkindhā, 104, 106.
 Kitavas, 97.
 Kṛipta, 306.
 Konow, on Sūdraka, 315.
 Kośādhyaṅga, 431.
 Kośala, 104, 106, 107; kingdom of, 161-62.
 Kośala Devī, 163.
 Koṣṭhāgāra, 263.
 Kṛiṣṇa, 77, 83, 89, 90, 91, 92, 99, 102, 103, 252 n., 319, 389; in Jaina literature, 394.
 Kṛiṣṇadeva Rāya, 488 n.
 Kṛiṣṇāla, 55.
 Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, on administration of South India, 470.
 Kṛittivāsa, 488 n.
 Kṣatra, 53, 60; as Ratnin, 44; as Vira, 43.
 Kṣatrapa, 226, 229. See Satrap.
 Kṣatriya(s), 23, 47, 49, 50, 53, 54, 62, 65, 69, 80, 82, 84, 89, 92, 96, 99, 100, 105, 106, 112, 320, 328, 332, 353, 354, 449, 508, 509; as governing body, 12; as rulers in Jātakas, 122, 123; in Alberūnī, 442, 443, 445, 446; in Jātakas, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 125, 127, 142, 220; in Kāshmīr, 420; in Manu, 239; in R̥gveda, 19; in Somadeva, 397, 398; origin and position, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 35; variation of the word, 'Khattiya,' in Jātakas, 120.
 Ksemendra, and his works, 435-36.
 Kṣitipasamhāti, 348.
 Kula, 160.
 Kulaputraka, 307, 308.
 Kumāra, 347, 372, 373, 374, 376.
 Kumāra Rāja, 356.
 Kumāradevī, 282.
 Kumārāmātya, 296, 303, 304, 307, 366, 383, 437.
 Kumārasambhava, 312.
 Kumāragupta, 283, 291, 304.
 Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, 73, 75; on beginning of Smṛitis, 236.
 Kuṇāla, 193.
 Kuṇḍalavana, 231.
 Kuṇḍina, 93.
 Kūṇika, 163.
 Kuntibhoja, 319.
 Kural (or Muppāl), 278-79.
 Kārma Purāṇa, 329 n., 330; state, society, etc., in, 336.
 Kurus, 78, 87.
 Kuśadhvaṅga, 111.
 Kuśāna(s), 228; Kuśāna dynasty, 229 sqq.
 Kutsa, 21.
Laissez-faire, 12.
 Lājukas, 196, 208, 209-210, 211, 212, 213.
 Lakkhana Pandita, (Lakṣmaṇa), in Jātakas, 104, 136.
 Lakṣmaṇa, 105, 108; variation, Lakkhana Pandita, 104, 136.
 Lalitavistara, 159.
 Lallā Dīkṣita, on meaning of Cāṭa, 299.
 Laṅkā, 104, 113.
 Lassen, on Mahābhārata, Lalitāditya, 421, 423; political testament of, 426, 429.

- Lalitāṅgadeva, 393.
 Lāṭa Viṣaya, 304.
 Lātyāyana Srauta Sūtra, 59.
 Law, and its administration,
 in Alberūni, 443—46; and
 justice, in Baudhāyana,
 68—70; and law suits in
 Bṛihaspati, 324—25; and
 sources of law in Agni
 Purāṇa, 333; in Manu,
 240—41; Aśoka's reform
 in penal law, 211; civil
 and criminal law, in Gau-
 tama, 66-67, in Manu,
 244—46; civil law in Kau-
 talya, 266-67; criminal
 law of the Guptas, 285;
 in Āpastamba, 71, 72-73;
 in Nārada, 323; in Parā-
 śara, 327; in Persia and
 India, 493; limbs of a
 law-suit, in Agni Purāṇa,
 333; of inheritance, in
 Kālidāsa, 311, 315; of war
 in Baudhāyana, 70; penal
 law, in Kauṭalya, 274-75;
 in 7th century, 371; sour-
 ces of, in Baudhāyana,
 69; the "law," 375;
 under the Mauryas, 187-
 88. See also Dharma.
 Lekhakas, 300, 432.
 Licchavi, 282.
 Liṅga Purāṇa, 337.
 Liṅgāyata Vivekacintāmaṇi,
 384.
 Lipikāras, 213.
 Local Government. See
 under Government.
 Lodīs, feudalism among
 the, 488.
 Ludwig, on Sabhā and
 Samiti, 30 n.
 Macdonell, on Bṛihadde-
 vatā, 76.
 Macedonian Empire and
 Hindu Empire, 492.
 Machiavelli, as a force in
 Europe, 390; compared to
 Kauṭalya, 257; compared
 to Tiruvalluvar, 279; on
 king's conduct, etc., 99.
 Mādhava (king), 376.
 Mādhavācārya, on local
 usage, 238; on Smṛitis, 237.
 Madhyama, 255.
 Madhyamaśi, 45.
 Madhyamavyāyoga, 320.
 Magadha, 339; administrat-
 ive machinery of, in 8th—
 10th centuries, 405—408;
 Buddhism in, 114; first
 beginnings of the impe-
 rialism of, 48; kingdom
 of, 162—64; under the
 Mauryas, 176—78.
 Magadhas, 114.
 Māgadhi, 116.
 Māgha, and his views on po-
 litics, 389-90.
 Mahābala, 393.
 Mahābalādhikṛita, 294, 304,
 305, 381.
 Mahābalādhyaṅga, 294.
 Mahābhārata, 76, 77—103,
 103, 104, 105, 106, 110,
 112, 113, 116, 239, 243,
 250, 252 n., 318, 320,
 329 n., 330, 335, 338 n.,
 381, 390, 396, 461, 471,
 491; administration
 in, 91 sqq.; aristoc-
 racy in, 84; caste
 in, 79—81; consecration
 in, 89—91; court in, 194;
 date, character, etc., of,
 77—79; ethics of the bat-
 tlefield in, 100-101; feudal
 elements in the state in,

- 81—83; foreign policy in, 98—100; guilds in, 103; king in, 85-86; local government in, 94-95; oligarchies in, 102-103; officers and ministers, etc., in, 91—93; on Dharma, 506; palace, etc., of the king in, 91; popular element in the state in, 86—89; relations of Suzerain with feudatories, 83-84; revenue and taxation in, 96-97; sphere of state activity in, 98; spies in, 95; succession to the throne in, 86—89. See also Epic.
- Mahābhāṇḍāgāra, 430.
- Mahābhoja, 223.
- Mahābrahma, 121.
- Mahādandanāyaka, 295, 304.
- Mahādevī, as title, 292, 354.
- Mahādhana, 122.
- Mahādharmaśāstra, 451.
- Mahāgovinda Suttanta, 158.
- Mahākaccha, 264.
- Mahakośala, 164.
- Mahākṣapātālika, 300, 366, 438, 451.
- Mahākṣatrapa, 226, 229.
- Mahākumārāmātya, 296.
- Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, 462.
- Mahāmātras, 201, 202, 203, 208, 208-209, 210, 211, 212, 223.
- Mahāmattas, 131, 145, 163, Viniccaya M., 160.
- Mahāmātya, 438.
- Mahāmudrādhikṛita, 451.
- Mahāpratihāra, 296, 308.
- Mahāpratipīḍa, 430.
- Mahāpurāṇa, 394.
- Mahārāja, 225, 226, 230, 231, 233, 285, 286, 288, 290, 291, 292, 303, 305, 307, 343, 346, 354, 361, 366, 382, 383, 404, 411; M. Devaputra, 230; M. Rājamahata, 229; M. Rājātīrāja, 230.
- Mahārājādhīrāja, 233, 282, 286, 290, 291, 308, 344, 346, 354, 361 n, 403, 404, 413, 415, 436, 437; or Parameśvara, 382.
- Mahārathī, 223.
- Mahārāya, 225.
- Mahāśabda, 413, 414, 416. See also Pañcamahāśabda.
- Mahāśādhanaśāstra, 430.
- Mahāśāmantā, 285, 288, 307, 346, 366, 413, 414, 416.
- Mahāśammata, 140.
- Mahāśāmantādhipati, 405, 413, 415, 462.
- Mahāśāmdhivigraha, 430.
- Mahāśāmdhivigrahādhikarānādhikṛita, 381.
- Mahāśāmdhivigrahika, 294, 295, 305, 366, 451.
- Mahāśarvadaṇḍanāyaka, 295.
- Mahāśenāpati, 223, 294.
- Mahāśvaśālā, 430.
- Mahātmyas, 329 n.
- Mahattamas, 411, 455.
- Mahāftara, 297, 298, 307, 367, 411, 415, 455.
- Mahāvira, 116.
- Mahāvīracarita, 388.
- Mahāyāna Buddhism, 230.
- Mahendra, 212.
- Mahendranātha, 310.
- Mahendrapāla, 391.
- Mahinda, 116.
- Mahisī, as a Ratnī, 44; as a Vira, 43.
- Mahmūd of Ghaznī, 386, 446, 447; invasion of, 441.
- Maine, Sir Henry, on rules of conduct, 62.

- Maitravaruna, 51.
 Majumdar, R. C., on political facts after Harṣa's death, 386.
 Mālatimādhava, 388.
 Mālavikāgnimitra, 312-13.
 Mānava Dharma Sūtra, 75, 239.
 Maṇḍala, 319, 389, 462; doctrine of in Mahābhārata, 100, as administrative division, 417; as sphere of diplomacy, 453.
 Maṇḍapikā, 412.
 Mansabdārs, 479.
 Mānsingh, as feudatory and imperial officer, 479.
 Mantrin, 112, 269, 462.
 See also Minister.
 Manu (Rājā), 329, 330.
 Manu (Smṛiti writer), 53, 58, 75, 114, 248, 249, 252 n, 254, 259, 277, 322, 323, 324, 325, 396, 404, 414, 491; caste in, 238—40; compared with Kautilya, 258; court in, 247, dates of, 236-37; importance of, 239; judicial administration in, 246-48; law and its sources in, 240-41; law, civil and criminal, in, 244—46; local government in, 242-43; number of councillors in, 268; on salary of village headman, 302; place of, 237; revenue in, 243-44; spies in, 248; state and its duties in, 241-42; writings and views of, 239—48.
 Manusmṛiti, 237, 239, 471.
 See Manu.
 Marāṭhās, 222; administrative system of the, 471 sqq.; nature of their empire, 473; temperament of the, 10.
 Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, 329; date of, 334 n, society and government, etc., in, 334-35.
 Marut (king), 49.
 Marutta Āvikṣita, 53.
 Matisaciva, 227.
 Mātrivisnu, 293.
 Mātsya-Nyāya, 403.
 Matsya Purāṇa, 281, 329 n; history of man, kingship, etc., in, 335-36.
 Mauryan, administration, Chap. VIII; Empire, nature of, 501-502; Empire, a stage in development of Hindu polity, 492; end of the M. Empire, 385; era, founded, 178, 178 n.; institutions, after M. empire, 215; pre-M. administration, Chap. VII (see Greek accounts, oligarchic kingdoms).
 Mauryas, 500; later, 215-216; political condition in the interregnum between M. and Guptas, 259; spies under the, 189.
 Max Müller, on dates of Jātaka, 117; on dates of Vedic hymns, 18; on Rīta, 506-507.
 Maya, 91.
 Mayūrākṣa, 293.
 Medhātithi, on Acāra, 238; on non-Kṣatriya kingship, 404; on Sreṇī, 414.
 Median Empire, local government in, 495.
 Megasthenes, 167 n.; on administration, 184; on administration of justice, 187; on agriculture and

- revenue, 190-91; on Indiar. cities, 173; on Kalinga force, 218; on means of communication, 188-89; on protectorates, 192; on seven castes of India, 178-81; on spies, under the Mauryas, 189; on town administration, 209.
- Meghadûta, 312.
- Meghavâhana, 421, 422, 426.
- Menander (or Milinda), 224-25.
- Merutuṅgâcârya, and his works, 458-59.
- Meruvârman, 436.
- Messengers, and their classes in Chambâ, 439. See Ambassadors.
- Meteorological department, in Kautalya, 263.
- Mihirakula, 291, 308.
- Milinda, see Menander.
- Mīmāṃsâ, 238, 249.
- Mīmāṃsâ Sûtras of Jaimini, 238.
- Minister(s), and their classes in Rāmāyaṇa, 111-12; and, their qualifications, in Kautalya, 268-70; as judges of king's ruling capacity, in Jâtakas, 128-29; as usurpers, 385, 396; caste and number, etc., of, in Somadeva, 397; in Bhâsa, 318, 319; in Chambâ, 438; in Dandin, 339-40; in Jâtakas, 142-43; in Kashmîr, 430, 431; in Manu, 241-42; in Merutuṅgâcârya, 458; in Puruṣapariksâ, 460; in Râjapûtânâ, 471; in seventh century, 365; in Somadeva, 459; in Tiruvalluvar, 278; in Upapurâṇas, 338; of feudatories at Suzerain's court, in 7th century, 351; of feudatories under the Guptas, 303; position of, in Mahâbhârata, 93; relations of, with king, in Mudrârâkṣasa, 390-91; status, etc., of, in Ancient India, 510-11. See also Officers and Mantrin.
- Mir-Adls, 484.
- Mir Muhammad Mâsum, 400.
- Missionaries of Aśoka, 201-202.
- Mitâkṣarâ, 404.
- Mithilâ, 136; Sanskrit Judgment from, 484-86.
- Mitra, 19, 26, 27, 28, 40.
- Mitramiśra, on Smṛiti-writers, 227.
- Mitrâmitra, 255.
- Mitraprakṛiti, 255.
- Mitrârtha, 334.
- Mlecchas, rule of, in Kathâsaritsâgara, 460.
- Moga (or Moa or Mauos), 225.
- Mohammad Ghorî, 441, 447, 477.
- Moksâparisad, 345, 347, 348, 351, 359, 377.
- Monarch; character of his rule, in Jâtakas, 126-28; in Greek accounts, 163; in Rāmāyaṇa, 113; in the south, 235; plains ruled by, 161. See also King, etc.
- Monarchy, as a dominant type in Ancient India, 8; in Ancient India, 503-505; in later Vedic litera-

- ture, 38 sqq., 43; in Persia and India, 493. See also Kingship, etc.
- Monopoly, state, in Kautalya, 263.
- Mricchakatikā, 284, 299, 315—17, 318.
- Mudrārāksasa, 284; political conditions in, 390-91.
- Mughal, administration, 480; Empire, continuing old traditions, 481—83. See also Muslim.
- Mughals, as patronising learning, etc., 481-82; as regulating education and social life, 480-82; court of, compared to Harsa's court, 356-57; impact of, rousing Marāṭhā energies, 471. See also Muslim.
- Muhammad-bin-Qāsim, 399.
- Muppāl (or Kural), 278.
- Murundarāja, 233.
- Musalman, see Muslim.
- Muslim, administration, influenced by Hindu administration, 479 sqq., influenced by Qurān, Hadīs, and examples of Baghdād, Cairo, and Persia, 480, introducing a profound change, 488 sqq.; historians of 11th-12th centuries 446-47; invaders, 441-42, 502; rule, establishment of, and relation of with Hindu polity, 469. See also Mughal.
- Nabhi, 392, 393.
- Nāgānanda, political condition in, 380.
- Nāganikā, (Queen), 222.
- Nagaraguttika, in Jātakas, 144.
- Nāgaraka, 271.
- Nagaraśreṣṭhin, 297.
- Nagaravyāvahārika, 209.
- Nāgasena, on tyranny of kings, 512.
- Nahapāna, 226, 228.
- Nahuṣa, 87.
- Naiśadhīya, 461.
- Naiyogika, 383.
- Nala, 85, 86, 89, 93.
- Nālanda, description of university, etc., of, 377-78; monastery of, 373; university of, 285 n.
- Nalodaya, 461.
- Nami, 320, 321.
- Nānā Faḍnavīs, 471.
- Nanda (king), 460.
- Nanda Pandita, on Smṛiti-writers, 327.
- Nandas, 218, 220, 390, 391; line, 176, 176 n.; rulers of Kuntala, 177 n.
- Nārada, 80, 84, 93, 94, 95.
- Nārada (Smṛiti writer), 238, 322, 325, 369, 379; dates of, 237; on law, administration, caste, etc., and date of, 322-23.
- Naragupta Bālāditya, 285 n.
- Naramedha, 90.
- Naravardhana, 343.
- Nārāyaṇapāla, 406.
- Nārāyaṇavarman, 405.
- Narendra, 310.
- Navakarmiga, 231.
- Navasevaka, 379.
- Nāyaka, 270.
- Nidhāyaka, 270.
- Nigama, 287.
- Nihela, 439.
- Nihelapati, 439.
- Nihīṣṭārtha, 334.
- Nikumbhallasakti, 382.

Nilakantha, 487 n.
 Nirgranthas, 376.
 Niska, 55.
 Niti, 251, 337, 458.
 Niti literature, 330.
 Nitimayūkha, 487 n.
 Nitisāra, 257, 281, 281 n., 330.
 Nitisāstra, 337 n., 436, 456 sqq.
 Nitisātaka, 340.
 Nitivākyaṃrita, 396, 398; commentary on, 398 n.
 Norman conquest, influencing Anglo-Saxon institutions, 490.
 Norman-Angevin chancellor, compared to Mantrin, 269.
 Nripa, 310.
 Nripati, 289, 323.
 Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa, 337.
 Nṛsiṃhaprasāda, 487 n.
 Nyarbudi, 36.
 Nyāya, 249.
 Nyāyakaraṇika, 299.
 Nyāyamālāvistara, Jaiminiya, 237.

Oath, as a kind of ordeal, in Brihaspati, 326; in Alberūni, 443-44; in Nārada, 323; in Somadeva, 398; of the king, in latest Vedic literature, 52.

Officer(s), after the Guptas, 309-310; as censors and missionaries, 201-202; combinations of officers, under the Guptas, 303-304; court and household officers, in Kauṭalya, 272; classes of, in Mauryan administration, 184; in Agni

Purāṇa, 331-32; in Bengal and East Bengal, in 11th-12th centuries, 450-52; in Bhāsa, 320; in Chambā, 437-39; in clan oligarchies, 159; in Deccan and South and Western India, 462 sqq.; in Deccan, in 7th century, 381-84; in Jātakas, 143-45, 148; in Kālidāsa, 311, 312, 314; in Kanauja, in 11th-12th centuries, 447-50; in Kāshmir, 430-33; in Kauṭalya, 270; in later Roman and Hindu Empires, 497-98; in Mahābhārata, 91-93; in Mālwā and Central India, in 11th-12th centuries, 453; in Manu, 242; in Marāṭhā age, 471 sqq.; in Mauryan administration, 189; in Merutuṅgacārya, 458-59; in Orissā, in 11th-12th centuries, 452; in Persia and India, 495-96; in Rājputānā, 476-77; in Sindh, in 8th-10th centuries, 401; in Somadeva, 397; in Tiruvalluvar, 279; in 7th century, 366-67; in 8th-10th centuries, Magadha, 405-408; Orissā, 408-409, Almorā, 409-410; in Mārwār, etc., 410-11; local officials, in Kauṭalya, 271; military, judicial, revenue, etc., officers under the Guptas, 294 sqq.; military officers, in 7th century, 372; of Kaniska, 231; of the king, in later Vedic literature, 43-44; of the Maur-

- yan capital, 186; of village in 8th—10th centuries, 411-12; official designation in Deccan, 417; official families, 304; recruitment of, 368; revenue officers, in Jātakas, 148; salaries of, 367-68; special officers of the frontiers, under Aśoka, 195; supervision, etc., over the, in Manu, 243; under Āndhras, 223-24; under Aśoka, 208—13; under Guptas, 289; under Satraps, 227. See also Ministers.
- Oldenburg, on Buddhist scriptures, 115.
- Oligarchy, in Greek accounts, 168, 171, 192; in later Vedic literature, 38; in Mahābhārata, 102-103; Cl a n - oligarchies, 155 sqq. (names of, 155-56; forms of government in, 156-57; the Assembly in, 157-58; the executive in, 159; local government in, 160; the judiciary in, 160; confederations of, 160-61); tribal oligarchies, after the Guptas, 346; in Ancient India, 503-504; in Greek accounts, 168; in Gupta age, 287.
- Ordeals, in Agni Purāṇa, 333; in Alberūnī, 444-45; in Brihaspati, 325-26; in Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 55; in Manu, 247-48; in Mṛicchakaṭikā, 316-17; in Nārada, 323; in 7th century, 370-71; under the Mauryas, in Greek accounts, 187-88.
- Orissā, administration of, in 11th-12th centuries, 452.
- Pādānudhyāta, 289.
- Padma Gupta, political matter in, 458.
- Padma Purāṇa, 239, 327, 338 n.; (Jaina) 394; Nīti, etc., in, 337.
- Pāla Dynasty, 403.
- Pāli, Buddhist literature in, 115; Kern on, 116 n.; Sylvain Lévi on, 115.
- Pañcālas, 78.
- Pañcamahāśabda, 416, 430, 462; and its meaning, 383-84. See also Mahāśabda.
- Pañcatantra, date of, translations of in various languages, nature and contents of, 341-42.
- Pālaka, 317.
- Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa. See Vedic literature.
- Pandae, race ruled by women, 172.
- Pāṇḍu, 80, 83, 86, 87.
- Pāṇḍus, 78, 80, 86, 91, 92, 99.
- Pāṇḍyas, 172.
- Pāṇini, 168 n., 173, 499.
- Pāradas, 97.
- Paramabhaṭṭāraka, (as title of suzerains), 286, 290, 354, 403, 404, 457.
- Paramadaivata, (as title of independent king); 291.
- Paramadevī, 351.
- Paramārdideva, 410.
- Parameśvara, (as title of suzerains), 286, 290, 354, 382, 403, 404, 437.
- Parāśara, 327, 327 n., 376; on qualification of ministers, 269.

- Parâsara Grihya Sûtra, 61.
 Pâraskara Grihya Sûtra, 61.
 Parâsu Râma, extermination of Kṣatriyas by, 508 *n.*
 Pârsvanâtha, 154 *n.*
 Pârīkṣita, 88.
 Pârīkṣitas, 59.
 Paṛiṣad, as advisory board, 207-208; as legal assembly, 249-50; doubtful points referred to, 508.
 Parivrâjaka Mahârâjas, 305.
 Parivrâjikâ, 312.
 Parivrikṭi, as a Ratnin, 44.
 Pargiter, on Aryans mixing with invaders, 115 *n.*; on date of Mârkanḍeya Purâṇa, 334 *n.*; on Mahâbhârata, 79 *n.*; on Pauranic data, 329 *n.*
 Parna, 43.
 Pârṣnigrâha, 255.
 Pârṣnigrâhâsâra, 255.
 Pârtha, 82.
 Pârthia, effect of the rise of, 492.
 Pasenadi, 162.
 Pâsupatas, 376.
 Patala, compared to Sparta, 169.
 Pâtaliputra (or Pataliputta), 164, 173, 206, 218, 219, 221, 282, 390; description and administration of, in Greek accounts, (called Pâlibothra), 184-87; hospitals at, 285; income from, under Aśoka, 213-14.
 Pathak, K. B., on Subandhu, 340 *n.*
 Pathân administration, 480.
 Patika, 225.
 Patralekhâ, 364.
 Patrokles, on Alexander, 166.
 Pauras, 499.
 Paveni-patthakân, 160.
 People agreeing to kill king, 232; division of, into Pauras and Jânâpadas, 396, 463; in later Vedic literature, 34; in politics, in later Vedic age, 38-40; in politics, in Mahâbhârata, 88.
 Persian, administration influencing Muslim administration, 480; court compared to Harṣa's court, 356-57; dominion in India, 165-66; Empire compared with Hindu Empire, 493-96; influence on India, 492-96; influences as betrayed by Aśokan inscriptions, 195-96.
 Piśuna, on qualification of minister, 269.
 Plato, 181.
 Pliny, on Indian castes, 179; on Indian territory, 173; on Pâtali-putra, 185; on some Indian armies, 177; on Takkasilâ, 123.
 Plutarch, 167 *n.*; on Alexander's invasion, 177; on memory of Alexander's exploits, 174 *n.*
 Police, and P. officers, etc., after the Guptas, 307; in Bhâsa, 320; in Chambâ, 438; in Clan Oligarchies, 159; in Jâtakas, 144; in Kâlidâsa, 314; in 7th century, 366, 367, 372; in 8th-10th centuries in Magadha, 405, 406; under Guptas, 299; under Satraps, 277. See also Officers.

- Political, arrangements of Alexander, 173—75; conditions, after Harṣa, 385 sqq.; in Bhavabhūti, 389; in Chambā, 436 sqq.; in Deccan, in 7th century, 381—84; in Greek accounts, 168—72; in Kādambarī, 352—53; in Kālidāsa, 309—15; in Kautalya, 254 sqq.; in later Vedic literature, 36 sqq.; in latest Vedic literature, 47 sqq.; in Mahārāṣṭra, 471—73; in Nāgānanda and Ratnāvalī, 380; in North, 473 sqq.; in Rājputānā, in Muslim age, 475—79; in Somadeva, 396—98; in Vijayanagara, 470; of Sindh in 8th—10th centuries, 399—402; under the Guptas, 285 sqq.; fundamental political conditions in 7th century, 345 et sq.; political history, beginnings of Indian, 154; political infanticide, in Greek accounts, 168—69; political institutions, as influenced by geography, in India, 3 sqq.; evidence about them, 1 et sq.; in Upapurāṇas, 337—38; of the South, 235; political organisation, in Rīgveda, 23 et sq.; political reflections, in Kalhana, 426, 429—30. See Political Conditions, etc.
- Polygamy among aristocrats, 223; and its effects, in Kautalya, 267; in Kālidāsa, 313. See Harem.
- Popular element, in Brihaspati, 324; in Jātakas, 133; in judicial administration, in Manu, 246; in later Vedic literature, 38—40; in Mahābhārata, 87—88; in Rāmāyaṇa, 109; in Rīgvedic polity, 31; in 11th—12th centuries' administration, 454—55; regard for popular sentiment, in Bhavabhūti, 389.
- Population, of Ancient India compared to that of modern India, 7. See also Census.
- Prabandha Cintāmaṇi, political matter in, 453—59.
- Prabhākaravardhana, 344, 349, 350, 360, 363, 375.
- Prabhāvatī Guptā, 301.
- Probodha Candrodāya, date of, and king's procession in, 342.
- Pracetā, 327.
- Prādesika, 208, 209, 212.
- Pradeśtris, 271.
- Pradhāna, 462.
- Prādvivāka, 485.
- Prahita, 44. See also Spies and Dūtas.
- Prahlāda, 25.
- Prajāpati, 25, 41, 50.
- Prākṛit, 116.
- Pramātri, 299, 366.
- Prasii, 176, (Praisoi) 177.
- Prathamapulika, 297.
- Pratihāra, 296.
- Pratijñāyagandharāyaṇam, 319.
- Pratīpa, 86.
- Prativartaka, 296.
- Prativedaka, 208, 213.
- Pratyāntanripati, 288.
- Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, 55.

- Pravarasena II, 306.
 Presents, from feudatories, in Ādi Purāṇa, 394; from feudatories, under the Guptas, 303; in Kālidāsa, 313; in 7th century, 369; to kings, under the Maur-
 yas, 191.
 Priest, as a power in Kash-
 mir, 420; as officer, in
 Kauṭalya, 272; in Alber-
 ūni, 444; in latest Vedic
 literature, 53-54; in
 Manu, 241; in Persia and
 India, 494; influence of,
 in Rāmāyaṇa, 105; influ-
 ence of, on state, 203.
 See also Purohita and
 Caste.
 Priestcraft, in R̥igveda, 22-
 23. See Priest.
 Prince(s), as governors, 193,
 206-207; education, etc.,
 of, at Takkaśilā, 123-25;
 in Agni Purāṇa, 331; in
 Āśvaghoṣa, 234, in Kalin-
 ga, 219; in Kauṭalya,
 268 n.; in Merutuṅgā-
 cārya, 459, in Pañca-
 tantra, 340, in Persia,
 494-95; in 7th century,
 363-64; education and in-
 stallation of, in Kālidāsa,
 311; in high office, 408,
 431, 437; relations of,
 with kings, in Jātakas,
 132-33; in Kauṭalya, 267-
 68. See also Yuvarāja.
 Prithu, 87, 330.
 Prithvipāla, 382.
 Prithvirāja Cauhāna, 477.
 Prithvirājarāso, authorship
 of, and political condi-
 tions of Rājputānā in,
 477-78.
 Prithvisena, 304.
 Priyadarśi, 205 (Piyadasin),
 206.
 Priyadarśikā, 380.
 Probation, Lake of, in Greek
 accounts of Mauryan ad-
 ministration, 187-188.
 Prostitutes, in Kauṭalya,
 260, 267.
 Protectorates, in Kauṭalya,
 256-57; under the Maur-
 yas, 192. See also Feuda-
 tories, etc.
 Ptolemy, 167 n.; on Takka-
 silā, 123.
 Ptolemy Philadelphos, so-
 vereign of Egypt, 193.
 Pukkusa, 120.
 Pulakesin, 291, 345, 349,
 382, 383.
 Punarabhiṣeka, 52.
 Purāṇa(s), 62, 249, 252 n.,
 272, Chap. XII, 324, 328
 sqq., 338, 338 n., 364,
 387, 388, 508; dates and
 character, etc., of, 328-
 30.
 Purohita, 29, 35, 45, 64, 73,
 80, 92, 93, 357, 397, 424,
 508; and his functions, in
 J ā t a k a s, 140-42; as
 a Vīra, 43; in Jāta-
 kas, 122, 131, 133,
 138, 140-142, 149; in
 Kālidāsa, 312; in Kaut-
 alyā, 269; in latest Vedic
 literature, 53-54; in
 Rāmāyaṇa, 111-12. See
 also Priest, etc.
 Puru (or Porus), 168, 168 n.,
 173, 174, 176.
 Pur ṣ a, 34.
 Puruṣa (or Rājapuruṣa),
 208, 213.
 Puruṣamedha, 47.
 Puruṣaparīkṣā, political
 matter in, 460.

- Puruṣapur, 230.
 Puruṣasūta, 34.
 Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, 238.
 Puṣkara, 89.
 Pustapāla, 300.
 Puṣyagupta, 189, 190.
 Puṣyamitra, founder of
 Suṅga line, 216; 217, 218,
 219, 505.
- Qāzī, as judge, 401, 484.
 Qutb-ud-dīn Aiyabak, 441.
- Race, as determining social
 and political evolution, 9-
 11.
 Raghu, 309, 311.
 Raghuvamśa, containing re-
 ferences to Gupta Emper-
 ors, 309; political condi-
 tion, and king in, 309—
 12.
 Rahasya, 417.
 Rāja, 159, 160, 205, 222,
 226, 233, 285, 288, 289,
 310, 323, 380, 381, 382,
 393, 394, 402, 403, 405,
 421, 437, 478. See also
 King, etc.
 Rāja Kammikā, 148.
 Rājabhoggas, 145.
 Rājādhirāja, 290, 308, 436;
 R. Parameśvara, 382.
 Rājagriha, 162.
 Rājamārga, 265.
 Rājāmātya, 405, 438, 451.
 Rājan, 25, 31, 37, 38, 48,
 50, 59, 81, 83, 159, 382,
 405, 451; character,
 pomp, majesty, etc., of,
 in Rīgveda, 26—28. See
 also King, etc.
- Rājānaka, 413, 431, 437,
 405.
 Rājanīti-prakāśa, 337.
 Rājāññas, 145.
 Rājanya, 31, 45, 50, 159;
 as a Ratnin, 44.
 Rājanyaka, 451.
 Rājaputra, 354, 405, 420,
 421, 437, 451.
 Rājasekhara, and his works,
 391.
 Rājasika, 239.
 Rājasthāna, 432, 438.
 Rājasthānīya, 296, 307, 366,
 382, 432, 438.
 Rājasūya, 40, 49, 50—52,
 59, 90, 98, 217, 218, 273.
 Rājatarāṅgiṇī, 385, 423,
 425, 430, 432; and its
 character, 420.
 Rājendra Lāla Mitra, on
 date of Sukranīti, 486 n.;
 on Kāmandaka's Nītisāra,
 281 n.
 Rājuka, in Jātakas, 143.
 Rājputas, and their caste,
 404; established in Rāj-
 pūtānā, and harassed by
 Marāthās, 475; giving
 way to Musalmāns, 441.
 Rājputānā, political condi-
 tions of, in Muslim age,
 475—79.
 Rājukas, see Lājukas.
 Rājya, 37, 47, 59.
 Rājyavardhana, 343, 344,
 348, 350, 360, 363.
 Rājyaśrī, 344, 349, 354,
 378, 385.
 Rākṣasa (minister), 390.
 Rākṣasas, 104.
 Rāma, 105, 106, 107, 108,
 109, 111, 112, 136, 137,
 310, 311, 312, 318; as
 Jaina hero, 394; in Bha-
 vabhūti, 389; in Purāṇas,

337; R. Paṇḍita, in Jātakas, 104.
 Rāmadāsa, his advice to Sambhāji, 473.
 Rāmāyana, 103—13, 116, 318, 381, 389, 461; Bengali version of, 488 *n.*;
 Brahmanic influence in, 105-106; Capital in, 112-13; Caste in, 105-106; coronation and consecrations in, 110; date of, 103-104; feudalism in, 106-107; form of government in, 107; guilds in, 113; King and his circle in, 110-111; necessity of government and horrors of anarchy in, 113; popular voice in, 109; priests and ministers in, 111-12; succession in, 107—109. See also Epic.
 Rāmāyanamanjari, 435.
 Rānā, 437.
 Ranaabhaṇḍāgarādhikaraṇa, 294.
 Rānaka, 451.
 Raññobhāga, 148.
 Rapson, on Purāṇas, 329 *n.*
 Rāstra, 77 *n.*, 296 *n.*, 382.
 Rāstragopa, 54.
 Rāstrakūta, 382, 500.
 Rāstrapatha, 265.
 Rāstrapati, 296, 414, 415, 417.
 Rāstriya, 189.
 Rathakāra, as a Ratnin, 44.
 Ratnākara Purāṇa, 435.
 Ratnāvali, 380.
 Ratnins, in later Vedic literature, 43-44; 52.
 Rāvana, 104, 318.
 Reason of state, in Mahābhārata, 98-99; repudiation of the doctrine of, in Aryadeva, 281.

Religion, administration of, in Kālidāsa, 314; and state, in 7th century A.D., 373—75; as affecting Hindu political life, 13; as a check on despotism, 506-507; Aśoka and R., 202—205; in the service of espionage, in Kautilya, 275-76; when opposed to usage, in Bṛhaspati, 280.

Revenue, and exemption from, under the Mauryas, 190—92; and fiscal oppression, in Kashmir, 434; and its collection, in Jātakas, 148-49; in Agni Purāṇa, 332-33; in Āpastamba, 72; in Baudhāyana, 70; in Chambā, 439-40; in Gautama, 67-68; in Kālidāsa, 312, 313, 315; in Kautilya, 276-77; in later Vedic literature, 46; in latest Vedic literature, 55; in Mahābhārata, 96-97; in Manu, 243-44; in R̥gveda, 30; in Viṣṇu, 248-49; in 7th century, 368-69; of village, in 8th—10th centuries, 412; revenue administration under the Guptas, 299-300; under Aśoka, 213-14; under the Guptas, 285, 301—303. See also Taxation.

Revolt, against the king, in Jātakas, 127-28; in Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa, 337.

Rhys Davids, on Buddhist scriptures, 115, 117; on Clan Oligarchies, 155; on Dharma, 507.

- R h y s Davids, Mrs., on Dharma, 507; on Jātakas, 118.
- Rice, on designations of Decan officers, in 8th—10th centuries, 416 *n*.
- Richard Fick, on Buddhist scriptures, 117; on Jātakas, 118.
- Rigveda, 59, 73, 76; age of, Chap. II; change in the institutions of, 501; warning in regard to, 2. See Vedic literature.
- Risabha, 393, 394, 509; consecration of, 392, 443.
- Riṣis, 87; laws derived from, Ristisena, 76.
- Rīta, 28, 43; meaning of, 506-507.
- Roer, a Smṛitis, 327 *n*.
- Rohillās, feudalism among the, 488.
- Roman Catholic Church, 10. See Church.
- Roman Empire, contrasted with Hindu Empire, 492, 497-98; court of, compared to Harṣa's court, 356-57.
- Romans, compared to early Indians, 23.
- Rome, compared to India, 186; slavery in, 45.
- Rudra, 25, 51.
- Rudradāman, 189, 207, 226, 227, 228.
- Rudrasena, 227, 301.
- Rulers, grades of, in Sukranīti, 486-87. See also King, etc.
- Ruling class, caste of, in 8th—10th centuries, 404; caste of ruling families, in 7th century, 353-54; in Andhra regime, 223-24; in Jātakas, 122; in Manu, 268; in Megasthenes, 181; in Persia and India, 495. See Aristocracy.
- Rūpadarsaka, 277.
- Sabhā, 30, 30 *n*., 41, 42, 157, 214; as a court of justice, 42, 45.
- Sabhācara, 42.
- Sabhāsad, 42.
- Sabuktigin, 446.
- Sacala Miśra, 485.
- Saciva, 112. See Minister.
- Sacrifices, in Kālidāsa, 309-10; in Mahābhārata, 90-91; in Purāṇas, 331; in Smṛitis, 327, 328; royal, in later Vedic literature, 49-52; under Andhras, 222; under Śuṅgas, 217-18.
- Saddhamma Mahāsālā, 162.
- Sagara, 109, 218, 330.
- Śāhānuṣāhi, 233.
- Śāhi, 233, 308.
- Śāhityadarpaṇa, 340 *n*.
- Saka, 237; S. Kṣatrapa, 228.
- Sākala (or Siālkot), 225.
- Sakalakaraniparikara, 367.
- Sākhās, 236.
- Sakka, 127, 158.
- Sakuntalā, 313. See Abhijñāna Śākuntalā.
- Sākyas, 504.
- Salaries, and bonuses, pensions, promotions, etc., of officers, in Kautalya, 272-74; in Manu, 242; of officers, in 7th century, 367-68.
- Salt, royal monopoly of, 227.
- Samāhartā, 270.
- Samāja, 202.

- Sāmanta(s), 257, 285, 288, 289, 349, 381, 382, 395, 405, 462, 478.
 Sāmantaśūdamani, 289.
 Sāmantaśādikā, 213.
 Sāmaveda, 33, 62, 315. See Veda.
 Sāmbavya Sūtra, 77.
 Sambhāji, 473.
 Saṁdhimat, 421.
 Saṁdhivivrahika, and variations of the name, 294, 303, 304, 308.
 Saṁgamasimha, 307.
 Saṁgha, Ārya, 292; Buddhist, 158. See Buddhist S.
 Saṁghārāmas, 373, 378.
 Saṁgrahitri, as a Ratnin, 44; as a Vira, 43.
 Saṁgrāmarāja, 420.
 Samiti, 30, 30 n., 38, 41, 55, 157.
 Saṁkṣobha, (Mahārāja), 289, 305.
 Samprati, 214, 215, 216.
 Samrāj, 31-32, 36.
 Sāmrajya, 47, 59.
 Samrāt, 48, 50, 81, 290.
 Saṁsthānaka, 316.
 Saṁtanu, 76, 86.
 Saṁthāgāra, 157.
 Samudragupta, 282; 285 n., 293, 303, 346; reign of, 283.
 Samudrasena, 288, 351.
 Saṁvajjians, 161.
 Saṁvara, 130.
 Saṁvarṇa, 87.
 Saṁvarta, 326, 328.
 Sañjaya, 93.
 Saṅkarācārya, 281.
 Saṅkaravarman, 421, 422, 424, 431, 434.
 Saṅkha, 327.
 Saṅkha-Likhita, 75.
 Sāṅkhyāyana, 59. See Srauta Sūtra.
 Sanskrit, Buddhist literature in, 115; classical S. literature, 233; drama, 308 sqq.; ideas of Kautalya persisting in S. literature, 280-81; rise of classical S. literature, 236.
 Sārathi, in Jātakas, 143.
 Sarkar, B. K., on Kāmandaka's Nitisāra, 281 n.
 Sārṅgin, 292.
 Sārvabhauma Rāja, 60.
 Sarvadaṇḍanāyaka, 295.
 Sārthavāha, 297.
 Sarvādhikāra, 431.
 Sarvādhyaṅga, 295.
 Sarvalokasrya, 383.
 Sarvamedha, 52, 90.
 Sarvārthacintaka, 95.
 Sāryāta, 48.
 Sāsana, (or charter), 293, 307; S. and farmān, 482-83.
 Sāsanaārhaṅka, 334.
 Saśāṅka, 346, 347, 373, 375, 505.
 Saśāṅkadeva, 351.
 Sāsayitri, 300.
 Sāstras, 107, 319.
 Sāstropajīvinah, 259.
 Sāsvatakoṣa, 301.
 Satadāya, 30.
 Sataghnis, 321.
 Satagrāmādhipati, 332.
 Sātakarpi, 222.
 Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, 59. See Vedic literature.
 Sātātapa, 327, 328.
 Sati, among Hindus and Hindu converts to Islām, 482.
 Satrap, 174, 225 sqq.
 Satras, 292.

- Satrujit, 48.
 Satruñjaya, 99.
 Satvatas, 48, 49.
 Sâtvika, 239.
 Satya Hariścandra Nāṭaka, 461.
 Satyabhadra, 396.
 Saubhūti, rearing of children among the, 168-69.
 Saulkika, 300, 405, 438.
 Saunaka, 76.
 Sâvitri, 51.
 Saundara Nandam Kāvya, 233.
 Sandhâtâ, 270.
 Sâyana, 44, 68, 354.
 Sayodhasreñi, 113.
 Schroeder, on Mahâbhârata, 78.
 Scylax, on kings in India, 166.
 Scythians, Hinduised, 492; invasions by, 215.
 Seleucus Nikator, and India, 492; invasions of, 178.
 Senâni, 28; as a Ratnin, 44.
 Senâpati, 141, 159, 160, 217, 306, 307, 365, 405; in Jâtakas, 143, 145, 149; in Kautalya, 269-70; under the Guptas, 294.
 Senart, on caste in India, 20; on Dhamma, 198; on Persian influence on Mauryan government, 196.
 Seraglio, see Harem.
 Setthis, 145, 148, 153.
 Shamasastri, on Kauṭīliya Arthasâstra, 250-51.
 Sher Shâh, 481.
 Sikharasvâmin, 304.
 Silâbhadra, 373.
 Silâditya, 354; S. VII, 404.
 Silentiarii, 497.
 Simâpradâtri, 299.
 Simhâditya, 307.
 Simhanâda, 360.
 Simhâsana, 354, 361.
 Sindh, political condition of, in 8th—10th centuries, 399—402.
 Sindhurâja, 458.
 Siri Meghavanna (or Meghavarṇa), 283.
 Siṣṭas, 69, 238.
 Siśunâga, (or Siśunâka), 163.
 Siśupâla, 83, 389.
 Siśupâlabadha, 389.
 Sitâ, 104, 110, 136, 389.
 Sivâji, rise and coronation of, 471, 473.
 Siva, 229, 231, 287, 308, 329, 421.
 Sivarâma Tripâthi, 340 n.
 Siyadoni, 413.
 Skanda Purâṇa, 238, 329.
 Skandagupta, reign of, 283-84, 289, 292, 299.
 Skandagupta (minister), 365, 366.
 Slavery, heavy indebtedness leading to, in ancient India, Greece and Rome, 45; in Agni Purâṇa, 333; in Greek accounts, 169; in Vedic society, 23; resulting from warfare, 466.
 Smith, V. A., on Harṣa's reign, 344 n.; on political facts after Harṣa, 386; on 3rd century of Indian History, 254.
 Smritis, 69, 215, 250, 326-27, 328, 329, 330, 387, 445, 483; origin, date, character, etc., of, 236—39; meaning of, 187. See also Dharmasâstra.
 Social, legislation projected, in Kautalya, 260; order, in Parâsara, 327.

- Soma, 39, 97; S. Pavamāna, 27.
- Somadeva, and his works, 459-60.
- Somadevasūri, 252 *n.*, 281; and his works, 396-98; on ministership, 511.
- South, administration of, different from that of North, 500-501. See also Deccan.
- Sovereign. See Suzerain, King, etc.
- Sovereignty, emblems of, in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 339; gradations of, in latest Vedic literature, 47 et sq.; in Ancient India, 505; indivisible, in Mudrārākṣasa, 390. See also Suzerainty, Kingship, etc.
- Spartans, compared to Kāṭhas, 169; institutions of, compared to those of Patala, 169.
- Spies, classes and functions of, in Somadeva, 397-98; in Bhāravi, 339; in Bhāsa, 319; in Bhavabhūti, 339; in Kālidāsa, 312; in Kautalya, 255, 257, 275-76; in later Vedic literature, 44; in Mahābhārata, 95; in Manu, 248; in Mudrārākṣasa, 391; in Rīgveda, 28; in Tiruvalluvar, 279; in Viṣṇu, 249; in Yuktikalpataru, 457. See also Dūta, etc.
- Srāddha, 240, 328.
- Sramaṇas, 199, 220, 359, 377.
- Srauta Sūtra, 57; gleanings from, 58-60; under the Mauryas, 189.
- Sreṇi, meaning of, 414.
- Sreṇika, 162, 163, 394.
- Srenivāla, 103.
- Sridhautamāna, 402, 403.
- Srīdhara Svāmin, 338 *n.*
- Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 252 *n.*, 330; authorship, etc., of, 338 *n.*; duties of king and people, etc., in, 338-39.
- Srīpaṭṭa, 402.
- Srīpraśnavyākaraṇaṅgaṇam, 395.
- Srong-tsan Gampo, 372-73.
- Srotriya, 54, 68.
- Sruti, 76, 237, 238, 240. See also Veda, etc.
- State, and Church, 203-205; and guilds, in Jātakas, 152-53; and religion, in 7th century, 373-75; as business concern, in Kautalya, 262-63, 276-77; as Culture S., in Agni Purāṇa, 330; City S., 491, 497; controlling guilds, 379; duties of, in Brihaspati, 280; in Gautama, 68; in Manu, 241-42; feudal elements in the, in Mahābhārata, 81 et sq.; functions of, in later Vedic literature, 46; ideal Hindu S., 204-205; in Mahābhārata, influence of, on social life in Sindh, 420; nature of Indo-Muslim S., 488-89; scope of its activity, in Aśoka's reign, 197; in Kashmir, 426-27; in Kautalya, 259 et sq.; size of, in Arab accounts, 400; in Kautalya, 252; sphere of its activities, in Mahābhārata, 98; S. factories, in Mahābhārata, 95; S. monopoly

- of salt, 227; of mines, etc., 418; States in North India after Harsa, 386; states, list of, in Buddhist works, 154-55; typified by the ruling class, in Jātakas, 122; under Āndhras, 221-22, 227; under Aśoka, 204-205; under Kaniska, 230. See also Administration, Government, King, etc.
- Stein, Sir Aurel, discoveries, etc., 3.
- Stenzler, on Smritis, 327 n.
- Sthala-Purāṇa, 329 n.
- Sthāna(s), 307.
- Sthānādhikaraṇika, 307.
- Sthapatisamrāt, 296.
- Strabo, 167 n., 169, 170; on administration, 184; on administration of the capital, 85-86; on administration of justice under the Mauryas, 187; on aristocracy in India, 170; on Greek writers, on India, 167; on Indian castes, 179; on Indian king, 181, 183; on industries, 189; on Pāṭaliputra, 184-85; on revenue, 190-91; on Takkaśilā, 123.
- Strike, hunger, in Kashmīr, 420, 423-25.
- Subandhu, king, etc., in, 340.
- Succession, in Brihaddevatā, 76-77; in Jātakas, 128-32; in Kashmīr, 428-30; in Mahābhārata, 86-89; in Rāmāyana, 107-109; in 7th century, 360-61; in 8th-10th centuries, 401.
- Sudāsa, 22, 32, 49.
- Sudda, same as Sūdra, in Jātika, 120.
- Suddhodana, 159, 234.
- Sudharmasvāmigaṇabhṛitha, and his epithets for kings, etc., 395.
- Sūdra(s), 23, 45, 47, 53, 69, 70, 71, 72, 89, 93, 96, 106, 508, 509; as kings or rulers, 346, 354, 465; in Mahābhārata, 80; in Alberūni, 442, 445, 446; in Bhavabhūti, 389; in Jātakas, 120; in Kālidāsa, 312; in Kashmīr, 419; in Manu, 240, 243, 245, 246; in Purāṇas, 335, 336, 338; in Somadeva, 398; officers, etc., in Mahābhārata, 81; origin and position, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 35-36; Status, etc., of, in Gautama, 62-64, 66-67. See also Caste.
- Sūdraka, 315, 318, 352, 375.
- Sugandhā, 421, 429.
- Sugrīva, 318.
- Sukanāsa, 361, 364, 365 n.
- Sukra, 252 n., 486, 487; on Desadharma, 506.
- Sukranīti, 499; date of composition of, and political matter in, 486-87.
- Sulaimān, and his account of India, 399, 400.
- Sulka, 92.
- Sulkamaṇḍapikā, 412.
- Sumantra, 108, 112.
- Suṅga(s), 216-18, 221; end of S. empire, 385; their supremacy challenged, 218-19.
- Sūra Dāsa, 488 n.
- Sūravarma, 429.
- Sūrya, 39.

- Sûta, 52, 54, 82, 93; as a Ratnin, 44; as a Vîra, 43.
- Sûtra(s), 77, 79, 89, 96, 115, 154, 396; gleanings from the, Chap. IV; meaning, classes, etc., of, 57-58.
- Sûtradhâra, 160.
- Sûtrâlaṅkāra, 233, 234.
- Suvarcā, 87.
- Suzerain(s), and titles of, in Gupta age, 286; in interregnum between Maurayas and Guptas, 259; in 11th-12th centuries, 452, 453; relations of, to aristocracy of warriors, in Mahābhārata, 84; relations of, with feudatories or vassals, after Guptas, 306; in Kautalya, 256-57, in Mahābhārata, 83-84; in Nāgānanda and Ratnāvali, 380, in 7th century, 350-51, 352-53; under Guptas, 289-90; titles of, in Deccan and South, 463 et sq.; in 7th century, 354. See also King, etc.
- Suzerainty, circles of, in 7th century, 345; emergence of, in 8th-10th centuries, 403-404. See also Sovereignty, etc.
- Svarājya, in Vedic literature, 37. See also Popular element and People.
- Svayambhū Purāṇa, 336.
- Svayamvara, 83, 310.
- Svetaketu, 91.
- Sylvain Lévi, on Aśvaghoṣa, 233; on Buddhist scriptures, 116 n.; on Chinese account of embassy to Siam, 233; on Greek influence on Buddhism, 490; on Greek influence on Hindu Drama, 490; on Pāli, 115; on Sîri Meghavanna, 283.
- Taittirîya Brāhmaṇa, rise of kingship in, 25. See Vedic literature.
- Takakusu, on Harṣa's death, 344 n.
- Takkasilā, 118, 119, 131, 162; as a seat of ancient learning, 123-25; root and variations of the name, 123; Taxila plate of Patika, 225.
- Takṣa, as a Ratnin, 44.
- Talvātaka, 298.
- Tālikota, battle of, 470.
- Tāmasika, 238.
- Tāmil, character, 9; institutions, etc., 14-15; literature, historical and political matter in, 277 et sq.
- Tangyur, 225.
- Tanniyuktakas, 297.
- Tantra Vārtika, 236.
- Tantrākhyāyika, 341.
- Tara, 439.
- Tāranātha, on Aryaśūra, 281; on Aśvaghoṣa, 233.
- Tarapati, 439.
- Tārāpīḍa, 363.
- Taxation, and exemptions from, in Agni Purāṇa, 322-33; in Manu, 243-44; under Guptas, 301-303; in Gautama, 67-68; in Kanauja in 11th-12th centuries, 448, 449, 450; in Kautalya, 265; in latest Vedic age, 55; in Mahābhārata, 96-97; in Marā-

- thā age, 472-73; in Rāj-pūtānā, 476-77; in Vasiṣ-tha, 73-74; in 7th cen-tury, 368-69; in 11th-12th centuries, 455, 467; under Aśoka, 213-14; under Mauryas, 190-92; under Satraps, 227. See also Revenue.
- Teutons, compared to Marā-thās, 10.
- Thomas, F. W., Bārhas-patya Arthasāstra dis-covered by, 279.
- Tirabhukti, 297.
- Tīrtha(s), (heads of depart-ments), 112.
- Tīrthakara, 392, 394, 509.
- Tiruvalluvar, king, minis-ters, officers, spies, foreign affairs, etc., in, 278-79.
- Tivaradeva, 412.
- Tod, on a prince regulat-ing dress of his people, 510; Rājputānā in his An-nals and Antiquities, 475-76.
- Toleration, in Marāthā Em-pire, 473; in Persia, 494; in 7th century, 375-77; policy of, violated under Suṅgas, 216; under An-dhras, 222; under Guptas, 285; under Jaina king Khāravela, 220; under Mauryas, 199; under Sat-raps, 228.
- Toramāṇa, 291.
- Trasadasyu, 26.
- Tribal oligarchies, in Greek accounts, 168; in Gupta age, 287. See Clan oligar-chies.
- Tribes, combinations of, in Greek accounts, 172-73; in R̥igveda, 23-25.
- Tripitaka, names and dates of, 114-16. See also Bud-dhist literature.
- Trivikramabhakṭa, and his works, 461.
- Tulasī Dāsa, 488 n.
- Tuṅgas, 97.
- Tuñjīna, 422.
- Turkish Grand Vizier, com-pared to Mantrin, 269.
- Turuṣka(s), 448.
- Turuṣkadeva, and its meaning, 448.
- Tushāspa, 189, 190, 207.
- Uccala, 425, 433.
- Udāsīna, 255.
- Udaya, 131.
- Udayabhaddā, 131.
- Udayamāna, 402, 403.
- Uddhava, 252 n.
- Udraṅga, 298, 369; and meaning of, 301.
- United States of America, political system of, com-pared to that of India, 499.
- Universal dominion, as sum-mum bonum of royalty, in Kālidāsa, 309, 312; idea of, 4-5; U. conquest, in Adī Purāna, 393.
- Upakṛipta, 306.
- Upaniṣads, 57. See Vedic literature.
- Upapurāna, 329-30, 337-38, 387.
- Uparājan, 132, 137; as next to the king, in Jātakas, 140, 159, 160.
- Uparika(s), 297, 299, 303, 307, 366, 438.
- Uparika-Mahārāja, 296.
- Uparikara, 299, 369; and meaning of, 301.

- Upasthānabhūmi, 289.
 Upayuktaka, 415.
 Usage. See Custom.
 Uśanas, 99, 326, 328; number of councillors in, 268.
 Uśavadāta, 327-28.
 Utkhetayitā, 299.
 Uttara Purāṇa, 394.
 Uttara Rāmācarita, story and political conditions in, 388-89.
 Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, date, etc., of, and political conditions in, 320-21.
 Uttaramantrin, 417.

 Vādibhasimhasūri, and his works, 395-96.
 Vaijayanti, 327.
 Vaikhānasa Dharma Sūtra, 75.
 Vaiśampāyana, 364, 457.
 Vaiśya(s), 47, 62, 89, 92, 94, 96, 106, 189, 508, 509; in Alberūni, 442, 445, 446; in Jātakas, 120; in Kaśmīr, 420; in Manu, 240; in Purāṇas, 334; in Soma-deva, 397, 398; origin and position, etc., of, in later Vedic literature, 35-36; Vaiśya King, 346, 353, 354; Vessa, in Jātakas, 120. See also Caste.
 Vaitāhavyas, 38, 53; equal to Brāhmanas, 52.
 Vājapeya, 49, 50-52, 59.
 Vājasaneyin, 75.
 Vajjians, 161, 162.
 Vajrasūci, 234.
 Vakil, of the Indian Mughals, compared to Mantrin, 269.
 Valabhī, council of, 320; ruler of, 348.
 Vālin, the Vānara king, 106.
 Vālmīki, 103.
 Valūraka, 228.
 Vāmadeva, 17 n.
 Vānaprastha, 338.
 Varāha Purāṇa, kingship, etc., in, 336.
 Varahan I, (Sytho-Sassanian), 287, 347, 348.
 Vardhanas, 286, 305, 322, 347, 348, 385, 502.
 Varmalatā, 378.
 Varṇa, as origin of caste, 20. See Colour and Caste.
 Vārṣṇeya, 93.
 Varuṇa, 19, 26, 27, 28, 40, 44, 51, 54, 59.
 Varuṇa (Rāja), 43.
 Varuṇa Dharmapati, 54, 55.
 Vasantasena, 317.
 Vāsavadattā, 320, 340.
 Vasiṣṭha, 17 n., 58, 67, 73-74, 105, 396.
 Vassakāra, 163.
 Vassals, emergence of vassalage, in 8th-10th centuries, 402-403; from vassalage to independence, in 8th-10th centuries, 404; in Muslim histories, 446-47; in 7th century, 347; treatment of Suzerains towards, in Kauṭalya, 257. See Feudatories.
 Vasubandhu, 285 n.
 Vāsudeva, 230, 231, 443.
 Vasumitra, 217, 218.
 Vāta, and meaning of, 320.
 Vātavyādhi, 252 n.; on qualifications of ministers, 269.
 Vātsyāyana, 252 n.
 Vattagāmani, 117.
 Vāvāta, as a Ratnīn, 44.

Vāyu Purāṇa, society and government, etc., in, 335.
 Veda(s), Chap. II, Chap. III, 63, 65, 67, 74, 86, 121, 124, 125, 234, 238, 249, 315, 329 *n.*, 336, 446, 499; Chap. V, 78, 328; on Dharma, 506-507; relation of Smṛitis to, 237.
 Vedic literature, 94, 154; later, Chap. III; latest, 46 et sq.
 Vedic Society, 19 et sq.
 Veṇa, 87, 335, 337, 338.
 Venī Samhāra, 381.
 Vidatha, 30-31.
 Videha, 145.
 Videhas, 114.
 Viḍudābha, 162.
 Vidura, 80, 93.
 Vidyāpati Bilhāṇa, and his works, 435.
 Vidyāpati Thākura, and his works, 460.
 Vihāra-Karavhaena, 231.
 Vijayakumāra, 393.
 Vijayanagar Empire, nature and administrative system of, 470.
 Vijigīṣu, 255.
 Vijnāneśvara, 239, 404.
 Vikramāditya, 283, 376.
 Vikramāṅkadevacarita, 435.
 Vikramaśilāvihāra, as a seat of learning, 456.
 Vikramorvaśī, 313.
 Vilāsavatī, 362.
 Village, as unit of society, 8; in Jātakas, 145-46; corporate activity in, in Jātakas, 147; extent of, in Agni Purāṇa, 332; Government of, in Jātakas, 146-47; in 8th-10th centuries, 411-12; in 11th-

12th centuries, in North and South, 454-55; having Rājas, 402, 403; position of, 511-12; unit of society and administration, 504-505. See also Grāma and Government (local).
 Vinayāsūra, 296.
 Vinicchāmacca, minister of justice, in Jātakas, 143.
 Vinīyuktakas, 300, 383, 439.
 Vipra, 338. See also Dvija and Brāhmaṇa.
 Vira(s), round the king, in later Vedic literature, 43-44.
 Viramitrodaya, 327, 337, 478 *n.*
 Virayātrika, 438.
 Virocana, 25.
 Virutha (or Vyutha), 208, 213.
 Viśākhadatta, 390.
 Viś, 23, 24, 46.
 Viśālākṣa, 252 *n.*; on qualifications of ministers, 269.
 Viśaya, 296, 366 *n.*, 383, 417, 439; administration of, under the Guptas, 297.
 Viśayapati, 289, 297, 303, 307, 366, 381, 383, 415, 417, 439, 502.
 Viṣṇu (God), 292, 293, 329.
 Viṣṇu (Smṛiti-writer), 75, 249, 254, 259; dates of, 237; on foreign policy, 258; general views of, 248-49.
 Viṣṇu Purāṇa, 338 *n.*; government and civilization, etc., in, 335.
 Viṣṇugupta, 252 *n.* See Kauṭalya.
 Viṣṇuśarma, 341.
 Viśpati, 24.

- Vistika, and meaning of, 302.
- Viśvakarman, 49.
- Viśvāmitra, 17 *n.*, 105; as priest and king, 35.
- Viśveśvara, 332.
- Vohārika, 160.
- Vṛiddha Gautama, on Smṛiti-writers, 327.
- Vyāghrasena, 297, 299.
- Vyāvahārika, 270.
- Vyāpṛita, 417.
- Vyāsa, 293, 338 *n.*
- Vyāsa (Smṛiti-writer), 327, 328.
- Wāqiah-navis, of Mughal Empire, compared to spies in Kauṭalya, 275.
- War, ethics of, in Manu, 258; law of, in Baudhāyana, 70. See also Battlefield.
- Warfare, as an incident of kingship, 220-21; in Rīgveda, 22.
- Weber, on Greek influence on Hindu theatre, 490; on Mahābhārata, 78.
- Wema Kadphises, 231.
- Widow remarriage, 472.
- Wilson, on date of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, 334 *n.*
- Winternitz, on Kāmandaka, 257 *n.*, 281 *n.*; on Kauṭalya, 251.
- Witness(es), in Agni Purāṇa, 333; in Alberāni, 443; in Baudhāyana, 70; in Brihaspati, 325; in Gautama, 66; in Kauṭalya, 274-75; in Manu, 246, 247; in Mithilā Judgment, 485; in Mṛicchakatikā, 316.
- Women, and ordeals, in Brihaspati, 326; attendants, etc., in Harṣa's court, 356, 358; controversialists, 376; in Brihaddharma Purāṇa, 337; occupying harem offices, in Agni Purāṇa, 332; performance of censorial and missionary duties towards, in Aśoka's reign, 202; regent, etc., 222, 311; rulers, 428-29; in Greek accounts, 172, in Jātakas, 131; slaves, in Agni Purāṇa, 333; some practices of, condemned by Aśoka, 202; sovereigns, in South India, 468; spies, in Kālidāsa, 312; in Kauṭalya, 375; taking part in corporate activities of villages, in Jātakas, 147; witnesses in court, in Mṛicchakatikā, 316.
- Xenokles, 166.
- Xenophon, on Persian dominion in India, in his Life of Cyrus, 165; on Persian princes, 494.
- Yādavaprakāśa, 300.
- Yādavasimhana, 455.
- Yājñavalkya, 52, 238, 254, 259, 379, 404; date of, 237; on Dharmaśāstras, 326-27; on foreign policy, 258.
- Yajurveda, 59, 60, 78, 239, 389; and its recensions, 33. See Vedic literature.
- Yakkhiṇi, (Yakṣiṇi), 125.

- Yama, 44.
 Yama (Smṛiti-writer), 326, 327, 328.
 Yaśaskara, 424.
 Yaśastilakacampū, 398.
 Yaśodharman, 306, 309 *n.*
 Yaśomati, 354.
 Yaudheyas, 170-71, 217, 287, 287 *n.*, 504.
 Yauvarājyābhiseka, 90.
 Yavanas, 80, 189, 207, 218, 237; meaning of, in Manu, 491.
 Yayāti, 330.
 Yintu, 345.
 Yuan Chwang, 346, 347, 348, 350, 351, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 380, 383, 385, 479; on a prison built by Aśoka, 212; on Aśoka's justice, 211-12; on Harṣa's death, 344 *n.*; on kingdoms in India, 345; on ordeals, 326 *n.*
 Yudhiṣṭhira, 79, 81, 83, 84, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 100, 102, 339.
 Yudhiṣṭhira, (of Kashmir), 425.
 Yüe-chi, 229.
 Yuktaka, 415.
 Yuktikalpataru, and political matter in, 457.
 Yāpa, 293.
 Yutas, 208, 212-13.
 Yuvamahārāja, 417.
 Yuvarāja, 90, 107, 219, 291, 311, 361, 392, 405, 431, 467.
 Yuyutsu, 93.
 Zamīndārs, 437, 474.
 Zimmer, 26 *n.*; on Assembly, 30, 30 *n.*; on caste in Vedas, 19 *n.*
 Zimmern, on geography of Greece, 4.
 Zoroastrian contact with Buddhism, 230.



CORRIGENDA

Page	Line	For	Read
2	19	adapt	lend.
14	21	of	or.
22	13	dāśarājya	dāśarājña.
72	24	which should	which he should.
72	28	cattle	fields.
77	23	diaskeuasts	diaskenasts.
78	31	epic	the epic
85	16	Duryodhana	Duḥśāsana.
103	12	force	the force.
103	1 (note)	Śanti	Śānti.
113	4	Laṅkā	Laṅkā.
121	8	Brāhmaṇa	a Brāhmaṇa.
146	12	favour, opinion	opinion.
146	13	king's	king's favour.
159	9	Kātyāyana's Kāśikā	Kāśikā.
162	22	neighbouring	the neighbouring.
170	18	allowed	allowed.
219	10	Maurya	Mauryas.
252	25 (note)	Samadeva Sūri.	Somadeva Sūri.
253	7 (note)	Sunaśepa	Śunaśēpa.
259	14	Sastropa-jivinaḥ	Sastropajivinaḥ.
262	19	ways	wages.
266	7-8	professions, customs	customs.

Page	Line	For	Read
269	31	Vakī	Vakīl.
270	5-6	Saunidhātā	Sannidhātā.
274	24	title	tolls.
294	24	saṁdhvgrahādhi- kṛita	saṁdhivigrahādhi- kṛita.
302	6	right	the right.
302	14	Bhāṭas	Bhaṭas.
345	15	may	might.
360	16	attached,	attached.
372	15	or	of
397	10	policy	policy of
421	14-15	Puruṣkas	Turuṣkas.
430	27	fine	five.
455	14	Rājpūtāna	Rājpūtānā.
458	11	Navasāhasānika- carita	Navasāhasānika- carita.
468	22	central local	central and local.
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